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AUTHOR OF "BOYHOOD: A PLEA FOR CONTINUITY IN EDUCATION"

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BOOK I.

UNSELFISHNESS.

CHAPTER I.

In regarding the lives of boys it is hard to say whether the bigger break comes when the boys, as little lads, leave home for a preparatory school, or when, as boys just verging into young manhood, they leave a preparatory school for a public school. As one whose life has been spent in great part among boys in their preparatory school life, I have already written a book in which reaching hands backwards I have tried to pull home life and school life together, trying to make parents see the necessity of coming themselves, so to speak, on to the arena of school, and there, with the schoolmaster, continuing their help and support to their boys, working with the masters and with the school in the further development of their sons' lives. I have tried to show how this can only be done by parents eliminating from their minds

all jealousy of the new life to which their boys are going, and by schoolmasters eliminating from their minds all tendency to contempt for what they may be pleased to consider weaknesses in a parent's way of regarding his boys' development.

In writing as I did then I was making an appeal to fathers and mothers not to lose their hold on their boys' lives when they send them to school. I wanted to make my point that parents ought not so much to feel that they are "sending a boy to school," sending him into a new atmosphere, to be under new influences, as that they are calling in a powerful auxiliary to aid in carrying on their boy so many steps in the path of life in which his home has started him, and of which his home has already taught him the beauties to be courted and the dangers to be reckoned with. There must be change at every step we take whether as boys or men, there must be new things to be learnt, new experiences to be bought. But an absolute break there need never be if love takes the place in our lives that it should take; takes such a place

that every new fact, every new experience, can be referred back to the one place where we originally learnt the meaning of love in its truest sense—home.

I have appealed to fathers and mothers of boys, I want now rather to appeal to the masters of public schools, and to the great public opinion whose influence alone can alter, if it will but rouse itself, so much that is disastrous in the life of the boys in public schools. The life of a boy in a preparatory school of the best sort is not much different from the life of a boy in a home of the best sort. The family is much larger, the love of the father and mother are not there, it is not a boy's life at its highest and best; but it is very good, and in the discipline, order and obedience to personal authority the likeness to home can be maintained.

But public-school life,—do we not feel that when our boys go to a large public school they are gone from us indeed; the best part of them, the immortal part of them? Do we not feel that as far as their ultimate development is concerned, as far as the effect of their

character upon the acts of their manhood is concerned, all influence is to be derived from a sphere quite separate from our own? Do we not deliberately renounce our responsibility as to our boys' formation of character as men?

And what is the influence to which we are thus handing them over? In sending boys to a preparatory school parents feel to a large extent that there is at the head of the school life there a definite, concentrated influence due to the line taken by the head-master upon the various points of importance in the education of boys, and handed on by him to the members of his staff, the masters and other grown-up people working in the school. There is a centre of superiority which the boys must respect and which makes the tone of the school. What is the influence in a public school? It is the influence of the boys themselves. It is *their* standard of right and wrong that rules the "tone," it is their undeveloped instinct that makes the laws and settles the limitations of their own world. And for this reason one *fears* when a boy leaves his home or leaves his preparatory

school to take his plunge into public school life.

From the first moment that a boy comes into a preparatory school one's thought for him is: "How will he do when he goes to a public school?" One's efforts are mainly directed to teaching him to be able to *stand alone* at the age of thirteen or fourteen. One judges all his actions, all his standards of right and wrong, from the standpoint of how his life with other boys will be affected. To a certain extent this must be inevitable, but I hope to be able to convince some of my readers that, in many respects, it is all wrong; and that there ought to exist in a boy's life at a public school, just as much as in every other phase of his life, influences outside himself and his contact with his like strong enough to guide, lead and dominate.

In each preparatory school as it comes into existence there is for its centre the influence of the one man who founds it. His influence must be paramount: if it should fail it would only mean that some one else was in reality at the head of the school; it would not affect the

fact of the constitution of the preparatory school as such, which is that one man alone is answerable to public opinion for what goes on in that school. The constitution is that of an autocracy. The case of public schools is quite different. The head-master there is appointed by a board or a council; upon the wisdom, upon the penetration, the judgment of character of a body of men depends the character of the head-master of any given school. Except inasmuch as the head-master has himself once been a boy, and thus given his mite of influence to the formation of the present public-school system, he is—when he sets out to rule a public school—taking in hand an institution in the building up of which he has had no sort of "say". He is setting forth on the task of governing a country which already governs itself.

I was once sitting at the dinner-table of a friend: there was a large party, mostly men, three of them old Etonians. We had been discussing the health of delicate boys and the way it was considered at public schools. Said my host (himself one of the

Etonians): "The system on which public schools are worked is absolutely and entirely wrong". I was somewhat startled and looked round the table: there seemed to be a general sigh of acquiescence, and some one (the father of two little lads) said: "It's quite true". I said: "Why do we send our boys to them, then?" Made answer old Etonian No. 3: "What else are we to do?"

It is because there is nothing else to do, it is because there is no alternative for us, that public schools are allowed to have in their administration so much that is wrong. The system of public schools is in certain points the system of the "ring" of commerce. There is, of course, an amount of competition in the matter of minor details, and—in one or two instances—there is more than this, but as a general thing the public-school system is the same all England over. There may be more or less of this or that fault, of this or that virtue, in this or that school, but the standard of the highest possible that can be reached, the standard of the lowest possible that can be allowed, is much the same wherever we go.

It takes an immensely strong man, a man with tremendous individuality, to alter the tone and life of one of our English public schools, to drag it from its place on the dead level ground on which we are content to have our schools. He has to fight the surprise and indignation of his boys, of his staff, of his parents, of public opinion. Here and there one has done it. Here and there a man's enthusiasm and love have proved stronger than the weight of custom, and have forced their way through prejudice and mistrust to the hearts of his boys and to the mind of the public. And then the head-master dies or (the head-master's fate) is made a bishop, and what of his successor? Do those whose business it is to appoint him have but one thought in their minds: to look round eagerly on the world of men and draw from it a man of like heart and soul with the man who has been obliged to renounce his work, so that the good work which he has striven to commence may thus be carried on? Do they? Is it not often rather the object to find some one not so impetuous, not so original, not so

daring, some one who may again restore the school to its normal place in the ranks where it was before these "new ideas," these "revolutionary" sentiments, began to agitate its calm?

And there is—as there always is in all concerted action if we will only look deep enough—some reason, or at any rate some excuse, for this. If one acquiesces in any democratic system of government, one must also acquiesce in a certain level in the administration of that government. In a democracy there is only one thing that can raise the tone of the rule, and that is the raising of the tone of the community. When one reflects that the ruler *pro tempore*, a man chosen out of the many because he is considered to be strong enough to govern, is the influence *par excellence* which can be looked to for raising the tone of the community, one can see to what a task the public-school head-master is set. He has not only to alter and elevate the tone of his own school, but with it he has to draw the whole mass of ideas, notions and standards of public-school tone in the abstract.

No man can hope to do this with any success unless he be gifted in a very abnormal fashion. The man who can do it may very well be regarded by "councils" and "boards" as rather dangerous. He is bound to be a man of very strong individual personal characteristics, an idealist, an enthusiast, and as such he is necessarily feared by those whose duty it is to appoint the head-masters to our public schools, men who would interpret that duty as binding them to do nothing revolutionary or disturbing to the abstract public-school system.

We have before us this immovable fact: We must send our boys to public-school life. We ought to have before us still more immovably this resolution: We will not send our boys where they cannot escape evil. There is left for us under these circumstances only one course: We will insist upon the public schools being conducted in such a way that our boys may be sent to them with safety. We have all of us, parents and schoolmasters alike, stood more or less discontentedly by for generations while the public-school life of the

present day has grown up. We have allowed evils to develop which were inevitably bound to develop in such a society conducted in such a manner.

One may say roughly that the young manhood of Great Britain is formed in the public schools. May we not then estimate the worth of the system upon which public schools are conducted by the gross amount of good and bad to be found in the young men of to-day? If we do this we may say at once that the public-school life does such a fine work that we are justified in taking an optimistic view of human nature. But are we, in allowing that the public-school system is productive of more good than harm, contentedly to consent to circumstances in public-school life which must inevitably lead to a state of things where sin and evil can exist unchecked? Because the life of our public schools is such that by this life a man may learn endurance, *esprit de corps* and physical courage, are we to forget that the same system may foster in boys selfishness, moral cowardice and conceit? We look with complacency, and

rightly, on the good which the system of the public schools does, and we ignore the woeful harm.

It is right, it is necessary, if we are right in our estimate of the manly character, that boys should at a comparatively early age be thrown upon their own resources; that they should be taught to face the battle of life to a large extent alone; that they should, as we say, look after themselves. The life of the average school boy in a large public school is unequalled in its advantages for the formation of what is best in a man's character as distinguished from that of a woman. It fits him for doing a man's work in life as distinguished from a woman's work in life, as no other process of education could fit him. In his association with his masters, and with the other boys, in his lessons of prompt obedience to the rule which governs the society in which he finds himself, in the games and in the work, he finds all the opportunity for that development of his character which is necessary to fit him for the work of his after life, if that work meant only making a livelihood

or defending his property. An ideal public-school boy makes a splendid soldier or a first-rate colonist, but the world of men is not composed of soldiers and colonists, and even among soldiers and colonists there are virtues to be sought for and not found, because in our public schools no provision is made for their cultivation. A boy does not learn to be unselfish, he does not learn to be pure, at a public school, and I maintain that he might learn to be both. He learns all sorts of invaluable virtues, he has the opportunity of laying a magnificent foundation for a beautiful life, and it all just fails for want of the one thing needful. It fails because in learning to depend entirely upon himself, a boy may lose that power of sympathy with others, without which no good work for others can be done.

CHAPTER II.

I HAVE said that a boy does not learn to be unselfish at school, and this statement wants qualification. I should rather say that a boy does not learn to be selfless at school. He does learn to sink himself and the gratification of his own wishes when the needs of the society in which he finds himself, when the work on which he is engaged, demand it. And this power of self-denial, this lesson of self-control, is most valuable. It is a very great thing that a man should know how to identify himself so completely with the welfare of the whole of which he himself is part that he can deny himself, can control himself, for the good of that whole. And this lesson a boy learns thoroughly at school, and an excellent lesson it is. But where is the blemish? It is here: the self is sunk that the self may be uplifted; the whole is esteemed and worked for only because it is a whole of which this valued self

is a part. Patriotism and *esprit de corps* are learnt at school, and learnt thoroughly, but humanity and true loyalty are left to look after themselves. Patriotism should be but one expression of humanity. *Esprit de corps* should be but one expression of loyalty. A man ought to love his country because to his love of all God's creatures is added his debt of love to the country which has produced him, to those who have aided in his nurture and toiled for his good. A man ought to "stand by" the society in which he finds himself only when he finds in that society qualities which make loyalty to its demands loyalty to all that is best and highest. If patriotism and *esprit de corps* lead boys and men to value their own country and their own society primarily because they themselves are natives of this country or members of that society, then patriotism and *esprit de corps* become in them qualities no longer worthy the name of virtue.

The life of the public school fosters selfishness in a boy just to this extent. It teaches boys to value their possessions because they

are theirs. At the same time that it teaches lads to become incomparable soldiers, clear-headed and indomitable statesmen, brave and hardy colonists, conquerors in the world of men, it teaches them to become arrogant masters, *exigeant* and intolerant husbands, domineering and irritable parents. And a soldier is not fighting all his life, now-a-days he is not fighting for most of his life; a statesman only devotes a certain quantity of his time to assisting to govern the world; a colonist may have other interests besides the interests of bearing hardships and difficulties "like a man". So little of a man's life is spent in the practice of these splendid virtues, so much is spent in what gives opportunity to the display of his weaknesses—I would fain say his vices.

For vicious it is so to esteem one's self that all others pale before the importance of that self, so to esteem one's own wishes that the gratification of them stands so plainly first in one's mind that the wishes and desires of others must perforce be seen through a cloudy medium. Vicious it is so to live that the little jars and frets of home, the inevitable

small difficulties of "common" life, are made into so many seeds with which to sow the crops of disunion and discontent, instead of treating each as it comes as an opportunity for showing that power which is far better exerted in conquering one's self than in the taking of cities.

How can we be so foolish, so short-sighted, as to suppose that a life built on a principle which takes into account solely the needs of the boys themselves, a life which has gradually, through the passing of centuries, evolved itself out of the contact of boys with boys, how can we imagine that such a life, taken by itself, undiluted, can fit a boy for the work of life? As a general thing the education which a boy receives at his public school is all the education he gets, it is all the panoply of war with which he is equipped to fight his battle against the evils of the world, and of what use is it to him when he comes to face the "daily round and common task" of life either at home or abroad?

I will not speak just now of the young man's two great foes, irreligion and impurity,

I will try and deal with them later. I want rather now to draw my readers to think of what we call the smaller troubles and dangers of life. Public-school life can and does educate a boy into becoming a man who can, when he himself or his order demands it, be brave, hardy and impetuous, who can surmount immense difficulties, who can plan and think and *conquer;* and with this splendid achievement of the public school we are content. We are content to have a race of men who cannot pick a flower so long as they are men who can crush a dragon.

And this is why it is that women have had thrust upon them the sole possession of these virtues of the quieter life. But is it right? Is it not the very reason why the married life is often such an anomaly? If one looks closely at the households where real happiness and content live, where "squabbling" is unknown, do we not find that there the men have learnt to be gentle, have learnt to be loving, unselfish and sympathetic in some other school than the one where they learnt also to be indifferent to physical pain and strong

to face physical peril? I say a school where men have learnt to be indifferent to physical pain, for one knows how a boy, how a man, can bear pain when he chooses, that is to say when he considers the motive is strong enough. But the bearing of physical pain is as good an illustration as I could wish for showing what I mean in what I have been saying of the inadequacies in a boy's education when the result comes to be expressed in his daily life. What pain will not a man bear when the motive is that he should show a good front to the world, to the hunting world for instance, or the football world? What pain will he bear when the motive is to make those around him in his own home, his wife, his sister, his children, feel as little inconvenienced, as little troubled, as possible by the fact that he is bearing inconvenience and suffering trouble? I know many a boy who will take a bad "hack" on the shin (is there any pain more thrilling?) in a football match as though for him pain did not exist, and yet who would not hesitate to make his whole family uncomfortable in the holidays if he has a cold

or a headache. Do any of my readers know the man who would break his collar-bone on the hunting field and have it set by the nearest doctor without "turning a hair," and yet who will make his home the abode of misery until he is perfectly well, because he cannot find a sufficient motive in others' happiness for suppressing his murmurs and curbing his restlessness?

Of a pain or of a trouble one will say "I can bear it," or "I can't bear it": it is merely a question of motive. Boys are, as a rule, educated in a school which gives the motives of excitement, of *esprit de corps*, of showing a good face to one's fellow "sportsmen," all, and more than all, the force they deserve, while such motives as bearing pain, trouble or discomfort silently for the sake of not causing sorrow to another are too often quite ignored.

CHAPTER III.

My object in saying what I have said is not to seek to underestimate the work which the public schools do, not to treat lightly the help which a man gains through his education in them, but to show that this work and that this help is not what it might be, is not what it well could be, if schoolmasters could be brought to acknowledge, and the public in general and parents in particular could be brought to see, the evil which exists side by side with the good in the system of public-school education. If we could be brought to acknowledge that the evil so permeates, so undermines, the system that the undoubted good does not get a fair chance, cannot get full sway, we should insist upon a change. And in saying later where, in my opinion, the root of the evil lies, in what falseness of the system it originates, I hope I may at least offer a subject the discussion of which might lead

to some good, some chance of more clearness of vision.

The one undoubted advantage of public-school life is that it is a social life. Whatever else we may deny to it we feel this and feel it strongly. But this is inevitable. The social life in itself is no advantage; only as it is represented in this or that particular community can its worth be tested. And I contend that in the public-school system this social "tone" is robbed largely of what makes it most valuable by the fact that the tone is due, is due only, to the component parts of the society itself. The social life of a public school is essentially a democracy, it depends for its tone, for its standard, upon itself. So that while boys are learning during their time at their public schools to become worthy members of a society, they are at the same time learning to base their ideas of right and wrong on, to limit their standard to, the prevailing principles of that society. In the social life of the public school all opinions, all appreciations, outside the society of the actual boys themselves, count for very little, unless the opinion

or the appreciation relates to some subject which is of interest to their society *as a whole.*

Every one knows that the qualities boys most admire are courage and endurance. Therefore when boys get together they immediately knock out a standard which every boy must strive to reach of courage and endurance. The reason why these two qualities stand pre-eminent with boys is a natural and instinctive reason. Courage and endurance help a man to do a man's work as nothing else does. Armed with these two qualities a man may cut his way through practically anything that stands against him. But I should like to draw attention to the fact that it is only one kind of courage and endurance which has become the great *sine quâ non* of the public-school boy. It is the kind of courage, the only possible kind, which one could hope to find in a society which looks for its standard among its own members.

A schoolboy's standard is, of necessity, the standard of those about him. Therefore it is high in some particulars and low in others.

It is high in his appreciation of those qualities which benefit a boy in his intercourse with boys; it is low in his appreciation of those qualities which smooth and brighten the daily path of others. The heart of a boy belongs to a creature half savage, half angel; get the angel half well mixed into the savage; get the savage half permeated, conquered by the angel half, and you get a man who can do such work as God puts us into the world to do. But in a public school the angel half of a boy is left to itself and ignored, while the savage half is educated to the highest pitch, and the consequence is that we get a world of men who are principally engaged in fighting for themselves; fighting with all the excellent qualities which such warfare can teach or require, but none the less fighting for themselves.

Organised selfishness is the term that seems to me best to express the motive which actuates the average man, educated in the average fashion. It is scarcely necessary for me to say that there are thousands of men in the world whose education has stood them in far better stead than this; but, as I said earlier,

when a boy grows to be a man, unselfish, loving and sympathetic, a man whose life lies outside himself, he has arrived at this point in spite of his public-school education, not because of it. It has been some other influence than that to be ordinarily found in public-school life which has brought about this approach to perfection. And in all that I have said I want to come nearer to the point where I can say, with some hope of carrying conviction to my hearers, that the education which our boys get in public schools is in itself inadequate to form their characters as men. An education which is evolved from the laws and rules of a society which for centuries has based these laws upon the contact of boys with boys is not enough unless it is supplemented, governed and controlled by some outside influence, unless this influence points to some infinitely higher and nobler standard than could ever be found in a society which bases the motives for its actions on the approval of the members of that society itself.

Our truly unselfish men are those who, either through their homes or through some

other outside cause, have been controlled during their boyhood and young manhood by some influence which has drawn them out of themselves, forced them into action from some idealistic motive, from a longing after a standard higher than they can see or reach, because they have felt instinctively within themselves the necessity for such a motive and for such a standard.

But the life at school might provide this motive, it might supply this standard. It is the want of this idealistic influence in its economy which prevents the public-school system from being the valuable agent in education which it ought to be.

CHAPTER IV.

I HAVE spoken of irreligion and impurity as being a young man's two great foes. A well-known head-master has said that a boy is an irreligious animal, and I have heard this remark quoted again and again, and people seem to think it settles the question comfortably when they wonder why young men do not take naturally to going to church, or why their boys are bored with religious exercises in the holidays. I have said something about religion in the book on younger boys to which I have already referred which I do not wish to repeat here. I have dwelt there on the duty of home in this respect, and much of what I said applies equally to older boys. But there is more to be said on the point of religion in the case of older boys, and the remark that I have quoted above seems to me a terrible thing to say. For what after all does it mean when one says that a boy, or that any

one, is an irreligious animal? What does religious and what does irreligious mean? To say that a boy's heart and soul have in them no natural wish to speak to God, to praise or to pray to Him; to say that religion is, so to speak, no part of a boy's economy, is this what it means when we say that a boy is irreligious? One can take this remark as typical of the attitude that is taken regarding the probable effect of religion in a boy's life, of the attitude that is taken by this head-master, by other head-masters and the world at large. We say that a boy is an irreligious animal—we think that he is—and what is the result of this? What comes of our being content with such a horribly low standard for our boys in this matter? The result is that young men do not care to go to church. What comes is that boys are bored by religious exercises. Until we have realised the fact that a boy can no more live the life that he was created for the purpose of living, unless he has an intimate, close, living relation with his Father in heaven, than a flower can live without sunlight, until we have realised

this and *acted upon it*, boys will continue to be irreligious animals, and men will continue to try and live without the only real necessity of life. I know that the man whom I have quoted would say that when he used this expression he did not mean to have put upon it the interpretation which I have put upon it, and I am sure that he did not. But none the less it is illustrative of just this evil which I want to point out. We do think that it is a good thing that our boys of public-school age should not be "too religious," because we are afraid of their becoming emotional and morbid. We have seen the dangers of this in several cases, and so we are content to say: "Better they should do without God at all than that they should learn to regard Him in a false and harmful manner". But why is there this danger, why is it that one shrinks from altogether approving schools where religion and religious matters are put first and foremost?

If one were to bring up one's son to the age of fourteen in such fashion that he had never eaten, let us say, fruit; if one had

accustomed him to a course of feeding which had brought his digestion to the point of never assimilating fruit, and if one suddenly presented him with unlimited opportunities of eating it, would he not suffer, even if he only took what would have been reasonable and wholesome if his stomach were accustomed to its digestion?

My illustration is a poor one: no illustration which compares religion to anything of which one can have too much can be adequate; but it answers just this far, it shows what I mean when I say that a boy brought up in the ordinary way, a boy who has been offered religion in the way that it is ordinarily offered to a boy, cannot, if he be sent to what people usually call a "religious school," be expected to become otherwise than morbid and emotional if he have a mind which is in sympathy with religion at all.

I do not myself think that what we are apt to call the religious school meets the difficulty, but it is the best solution that we can get. A man and woman who bring up their boy to be religious dread sending him to the ordinary

public school, because of the dry bones which he will find there instead of the living organism to which he has been accustomed. They know that it can be no easy matter for a boy of thirteen or fourteen to keep his faith alive in an atmosphere where religion is treated in quite a different manner from that to which he has been accustomed. A parent who has tried to educate his boys in such a manner that they may refer their every action to a religious motive, can scarcely be expected to feel satisfied to send his boys to a place where the highest acknowledged standard for action is the good of the community. Therefore they prefer to send them to a school where the religion may be too pronounced, may appeal too strongly to the emotions, rather than to risk the stultification of their religious life altogether. Of the two evils they prefer what they consider to be the lesser; and they are quite right in considering it the lesser, for, after all, if a boy has been well grounded in religious matters, he may be trusted with a large degree of confidence to assimilate what is good out of any living religion which

is presented to him; he has learnt to regard religion in a thorough, wholesome manner, and the—what we may call—sentimental aspect of it will not appeal to him.

I feel that I am bound to justify what I have said as to the religion presented to boys at the ordinary English public school. I have said that it is as dry bones compared with the living organism of the true religious life. The first way that occurs to me of trying to justify what I have said is to point to the quality of the religion of the average young man, and by saying that this it is what public-school life has provided him with. But I hope that it is possible to be more convincing than this, and in saying what I say now, I would appeal directly to the head-masters of public schools, and I would do so with all the intensity of which I am capable. The head-masters of public schools are men who are vowed to Christ, they are men who, by their profession, are bound by their every action, by their every word, to insist that the teaching of Christ is pre-eminent above all other teaching, and that nothing in this world ought to count above or

before it. The head-masters of the public schools ought to insist upon having more power over the spiritual life of the schools over which they are set. There should be no such thing as the possibility of an under-master being allowed to stay a month in a school when he has shown that he is unfit for the care and education of boys. There should be no such thing as the feeling, with which nearly all head-masters are hampered, of the difficulty—almost the impossibility—of getting rid of "old stagers". Head-masters ought to be a great deal more autocratic than they are. Only so can it be insured that their influence will pervade the school as it should if they are to do the work which many of them must be longing to do. While it is possible that a head-master may have under him men whom he may suspect of a mischievous form of unbelief or immorality or cruelty, and yet of whom he cannot see his way to getting rid, the system which allows such a possibility to exist must be a false system of education. And I cannot see how the religious life in our public schools is to have a chance of getting any hold

until the head-masters are allowed "full swing" in the matter of the masters who work under them. We put at the head of our public schools men who have vowed their lives to Christ's service—we will have no other men as head-masters—and then we allow a state of things to grow up which makes it possible that under these men, in close contact with our boys, there should be serving men who may be unbelievers or may be men of loose and undisciplined lives. The "religious school" supplies a want, but it is a want which should have no existence. One could never hope for a state of things, I fear, in which all schools should be equally alive to the necessity of religious teaching in the best sense, but one might surely hope to see a standard existent which made it an understood thing that a boy could be sent safely to a public school with the knowledge that there he could have his religious needs supplied, that there he could lead a life on which religion had a definite permeating influence. An old head-master of Rugby used to tell a story of a parent who, having brought his boy to school and

gone with much care and detail through all the usual questions and answers, turned as he was getting into his carriage and said, "Oh, I forgot, Low Church, if you please," and drove off. This story does not go very far beyond the mark: people do treat the religion which their boys get at school as though it were kept in a cistern in an appointed place, arranged for in the architecture of the building, and as if it were turned on with a tap so many times a day or week and then turned off again. I have said much about this elsewhere, and I have spoken of the mischievous effect which the separating in boys' minds of *home* religion and *school* religion has, and I do not want to say this again, but I do want to try and point out how impossible it is that a boy should grow to be a religious man in the atmosphere that is at present to be found in most English public schools.

I say that the religion a boy finds in the average public school is insufficient for nourishing in him any real religious life. And I think I could not want a better proof of the

truth of this statement than the fact that the time given to religious instruction is far less than that given to any other form of instruction, and the other fact that laymen (of whose religious feeling nothing may be known) are allowed to prepare boys for confirmation.

People may say, they do say I know: "But there is Sunday". I sometimes think that we should all be a much more religious people if we had no Sunday. No one knows how to spend Sunday but one who learns to be religious through the week. And, looking at the matter from the boys' point of view, what religious *instruction* do we get on Sunday as apart from other days? Two sermons perhaps, to which we listen or not as we like. As to the services, the amount of good we get inside the Church depends, and depends entirely, upon how we have been taught outside it. And for the rest of the day, the part not spent in church, where does the religion come in with the average boy?

There are of course many parents to whom it is a matter of indifference whether their boys have a religious education or not; but I,

for one, would sooner see schools which were definitely irreligious in tone provided for the sons of such parents if it would leave the hands of our head-masters who do undertake the profession of education from a religious motive free to work with that understanding. I do not say, I do not feel myself capable of judging such a point, that a head-master ought never to engage as a master a man whose religious views are not decided, a man who is not definitely a Christian. But I do say that it ought to be within the power of every head-master to retain or dismiss, without being answerable to any one, any man whom he did not consider a fit agent in the work of education.

I do not want to leave any of my readers with the impression that there is no religion in public schools. There is religion, but there is not religious life. It is not natural in a public school for a master to say, for instance, to a boy when discussing with him some evil existent in him or in his form, "Have you prayed about this?" or "Have you asked God to help you in this matter?" Such a

question as either of these would be received with surprise by most boys. A master who spoke thus would be set down as too pious for anything, an unpractical sort of idiot. And yet hundreds of men would like to be able to put the matter on a religious ground; many and many a man who has to do with boys knows that it is the only ground on which to fight sin successfully; and it is just this feeling of the chance of being misunderstood that prevents their taking the definite religious line of argument which they otherwise would.

The religion which a boy is expected to absorb at school, the only religion which, under the usual system, he can absorb, is a religion which stands a man in very poor stead when it comes to any question of applying it to his daily life. It is a religion which leads a man in after life to go to church on Sunday at eleven o'clock with his wife and family, but it is not a religion which would lead a man to insist upon clean or reverent language in his smoking-room.

The public-school life is not the religious life, it is not a life in which religion has any

true influence, and it never will be until parents insist that it shall be. And that will not happen until people have left off believing that a boy cannot be manly and religious at the same time. As things are at present it is not at all easy for a boy at a public school to be both manly and religious, though, thanks be to God who giveth us the victory, it is possible; but if boys were brought up in such fashion that when they went to a public school the religious life were demanded for them it would in time be supplied.

We have instances enough in history, in contemporary history as well, to contradict the idea that it is not possible to be both manly and religious. But where a man is both, he is so in spite of his public-school training, not because of it. And when I say a "religious" man, I mean a man who is not afraid to let it be known that he will not do a mean thing, will not lie, will not act cruelly, because primarily and before everything he loves Christ, and because his standard is nothing less than Christ's order, Be ye perfect. When a man can do this, he is doing

everything that the finest product of our public schools can do, and he is adding to the doing of it this: he is helping the growth of Christ's religion in the hearts of others, he is doing God's work because the purpose for which God sends him into the world is to work for others.

It is difficult for me to speak of the defects in the religion offered to boys at public schools without going back to their home life, and of that I have spoken elsewhere. I believe it to resolve itself, as I have already implied, into a case of demand and supply. Boys are, as a rule, not naturally religious at the age of fourteen, only and solely because they have not been taught to be so. I wonder whether by what I have said I have given my readers the idea that what is ordinarily termed a "religious boy" is my delight. If this be so, I have indeed misrepresented my standard. But this I will say, that I would sooner see boys what people call too religious than see them as they ordinarily appear. What I long to believe in as a possibility is a tone in public-school life which makes it natural to a boy to act bravely

and to live purely because he knows it is the service he owes to his Saviour.

In writing as I have done, I do not feel that I have in any way done justice to the body of men who, as head-masters of our public schools, have so many difficulties to encounter in their position as head-masters. I suppose that most of them begin their careers as head-masters in a very different frame of mind on most points of education to what they find themselves in after a period of experience in that capacity. In a way I feel it to be an impertinence to say much that I have said, for I believe that, taken as a whole, the body of men who preside over our public schools could scarcely be beaten. We say generally, and we mean it, "They do their best": one's great sorrow is that they cannot do more. One's great regret is that our head-masters are forced into acquiescence with a state of things of which they must disapprove, that they are obliged so to modify their line of action that many of the theories with which they set forth on their arduous task can never be put into practice.

One word I would like to say in testimony to the excellence of the school sermon, the head-master's sermon. It is excellent; as a general thing, most excellent. Here, in the pulpit, the head-master feels that he is on his own ground, that he is unfettered by prejudice, unhampered by custom. But, alas, it is so easy not to listen to a sermon. And boys who are not leading good, wholesome lives do not want to listen to sermons. Sermons are a splendid vehicle in which to present good religious food, but where the appetite is lacking the fare will not be appreciated. Much good and inestimable help is given through the sermons of our head-masters, but not to the boys who want the regeneration, who need the help most. Boys, and grown-up people too, must have in them the desire to be better, the knowledge that they need help, before they will get much good out of sermons. The Sunday sermon should be, so to speak, the illustration of the week's teaching. And the preacher of a public-school sermon ought to be able to feel that in laying before his congregation of boys a high standard

of action, a lofty ideal of virtue, he is showing them no unfamiliar aspect of affairs, that he is saying to them what they are used to hear, because at the root of all their teaching and in the heart of all their education there lies, as the *raison d'être* of that teaching, as the source of that education, the love of God.

BOOK II.

SELF-CONTROL.

CHAPTER I.

I DO not believe that there is any thinking man or woman whose walk of life leads them, or has led them, among children, who does not think that school "grub shops" are an abomination. And yet they continue to exist. Mr. Clement Cotterill had his say about them, and a most excellent say it was, and Fettes College was in his time there, and in all probability is now, much in advance of other and older schools in the way it regarded, and taught its boys to regard, the question of "grub".

The usual system at public schools is this: that as long as a boy has money in his pocket he may—if he be so minded—have eatables, always more or less lacking in nourishment, finding their way into his stomach.

Every mother or father who thinks definitely of the ultimate welfare of their sons cannot fail of seeing, what every thoughtful schoolmaster cannot fail of seeing either, that

for boys to spend their money upon any pleasure which brings gratification to themselves alone must be harmful to their natures; yet there are not sufficient of these parents and men of experience to outweigh those who do not think upon the matter at all, or who give it so slight a consideration that they get no farther than the feeling that after all the indulgence is harmless; and so boys still go to school, and find there a standard on this subject which encourages them to selfishness and gluttony. If boys were brought up to see that it is wrong to spend their own money upon a pleasure which brings gratification to themselves alone, grub shops would cease to exist, because public feeling would be stronger against them than for them. A boy who has been brought up not to eat sweets unless they are given to him, and then only to put a right value upon them, will never visit the school grub shop, and surely there is not a man or woman among us, who cares to give the subject any thought at all, who cannot see the advantage that a boy who does not make it a habit to eat sweets has over the boy who does.

There is much to be said on the physical side of the question alone, quite enough one would have thought to prevent sweet-eating from being allowed to take the place in boys' lives that it does take. It is in children's nature to like sweet things, a child is abnormal who does not like them, but it is also in their nature to like not to go to bed at night, it is in their nature to like not to learn to read, but mothers do not say, "It can't be good for my boy to go to bed as he does not want to," or "We needn't teach him to read as it is evident he has no inclination to it". But over and over again one will hear women say that sweet things are evidently natural to a child, and that therefore they cannot do them any harm. They are about the only natural taste that is allowed to be good for children to indulge in, and why, when the indulgence in them is so harmful?

In dealing with little children, I think the habit grows up of letting them eat sweets because it is the easiest way of pacifying them. Any one in charge of a little child will say, "Give him a biscuit, or a bit of sugar, he

will be good directly". Good? he will be quiet, he will cease to be a worry—but *good!* If the nurse or mother said "Give him a biscuit," or "Give him a bit of sugar and he will be learning one more lesson in self-indulgence, he will be taking one more little step towards selfishness, putting one more little difficulty in the pathway of the future," they would be far nearer the truth. So many people will feel when I say this that to speak of self-indulgence, selfishness and moral difficulties in connection with a baby is ridiculous. That is just where it is, we treat our babies as though they were going to remain babies for ever. Are not boys greedy and fond of getting their own way? Are not men self-indulgent and selfish? Are they so for any other reason than because the very first beginnings of these faults have not been checked while the tendency to them was still but a natural instinct which might have been prevented from developing into a habit? If we look no farther than the immediate present with our children we cannot hope that our association with them can do them any particular good.

We treat our babies as babies, our little children as little children, our boys as boys, just as though each stage were complete in itself. If in each stage of their existence our main object were so to educate our children that they might be fit to enter upon the next stage, we might hope some day to find them launched into manhood with some sense of its responsibilities.

People will say again that boys grow out of the habit of eating sweets. They do—when the time comes for their growing into a habit of doing worse. A boy who has got into the way of self-indulgence in the matter of eating sweets, is not very likely to give up the self-indulgence when he outgrows the taste of sweet-eating, he will be self-indulgent in gratifying the more advanced desires of his more advanced years. If any one thinks that I am saying too much on this matter, that I am laying too great a stress of blame on a childish inclination to which there can be no harm in giving way, let him take his boy next time he comes back for the holidays and find out exactly how much of his money he has

spent on things to eat, and on the other hand how much he has spent on giving pleasure to others, how much he has put into the chapel collections (of his own money) and how much he has spent on improving himself body or mind. Let him consider that every penny the lad has spent on things to eat has gone in self-indulgence, let him consider that here he has to set self-indulgence against generosity, almsgiving and self-development, and I think he cannot fail to see what a mistake is made in thinking that it does not matter that a child should learn to love sweets to the extent that most boys love them.

I was talking not long ago to the mother of several children on this subject of sweet-eating, and she said that she really believed that it was a good thing for boys to like sweets, for when they grew older they would go on eating sweets instead of taking to drinking or smoking. "Have you not noticed," she said, "that when a young man likes to eat a lot of jam tarts or is very fond of cream and sweet things he does not care for wine?"

It was not the time or occasion to do more than politely smile; no doubt I left the lady with the impression that I agreed. But what at once occurred to me was a parallel case in which I could hear in imagination some one saying: "I really encourage my children to read trash, silly comic papers, and so forth, for as they grow older I find that they do not want to read books from which they might get much harm". To keep in your child an undeveloped, childish taste, to encourage him in its selfish gratification, seems to me scarcely the best way to equip him with the right reason for resisting temptation as he grows older. A man may perchance not care for wine because he likes sweet things, but one does not want a race of men who eschew men's faults because their places are taken by a childish failing.

It is definitely bad physically for children to eat more than a very limited amount of sweets, even putting the moral aspect of the matter aside. But one cannot put it aside, for nothing that we do or are allowed to do deliberately that is bad for us physically is

otherwise than bad for us morally, and it is quite as bad for a boy's character as it is for his digestion that he should pander to his desire for sweet things when doing so means giving himself a pleasure which no one shares, and which can do him no benefit, and wasting his appetite on rubbish which gives no nourishment, instead of using it for the purpose of assimilating wholesome food.

But it is not by abolishing grub shops that the remedy it to be effected. Again, as I said on a very different subject, it is a question of demand and supply. It is no use stopping the supply until the tide of demand is stemmed. When boys are brought up in such fashion at home, and in their preparatory schools, that eating sweets is not, to the majority of them, a necessity of their existence, the grub shop will cease to exist. If the majority of boys gave up visiting the grub shop, public opinion would vote it away. We do not, in addition to the library full of wholesome literature which we expect to find in every school, also expect to find a room where on payment of so much out of his own

pocket a boy may read trash, unwholesome and unedifying "comic" papers, for instance, or unhealthy and foolishly exciting tales; nor ought we, in addition to wholesome and good meals cooked and served with care and refinement, expect to find—a "grub shop".

CHAPTER II.

THIS is the argument which here I ought to be able unhesitatingly to bring forward, but here I am obliged to pause. *Is* the food provided for our boys at their public schools wholesome and good; is it cooked and served with care and refinement? I am rather afraid of not saying enough about this, for I am only intimately acquainted with the *ménage* of two public schools, and in both of these the food is as good as it can be; and for the rest I speak from hearsay. But if one discounts five-sixths of what one hears on the subject, there is enough faultiness in this respect to make one feel that the mothers of England are indeed a patient and long-suffering race; also enough to make one certain that they are patient and long-suffering in exactly the wrong place, if they do not rise up in a body and insist that their boys should, when they go to school, have proper food, properly cooked, given to

them, insist that boys should never be allowed to cater for themselves, and that they should be properly served and waited upon. Boys ought never to be placed in a position which encourages them to think about their food; it should be the business of those who provide it to see that it is suitable, properly cooked, decently served, judiciously and carefully varied,[1] palatable and wholesome, and there ought to be an end of the subject. Food ought to be no subject for critical consideration except for the providers thereof. Young men are actually proud of being epicures, and it is the commonest thing in the world to hear a schoolboy talk about why he likes this thing to eat, and why he does not like that. Children ought never to be allowed to talk about their food, but equally they ought always to have proper food put before them. One may dine at the house of a young man, or in company with young men, and often most of the conversation through the meal will be about what they are eating or what they would like to be

[1] I know a school where the boys have "milky pudding" five days a week.

eating. Can one imagine a topic of conversation less interesting, unless it be to minds which have learnt to centre upon self-gratification?

To feed boys badly and carelessly is the way to teach them to grow into epicures; if a boy has been taught to eat what is put before him, and if what has been put before him is wholesome and palatable, he will not think of regarding his food as a subject for conversation.

Eating and drinking are unique in this respect, that they are the only pleasures which we cannot share with others. The satisfying of our own hunger and thirst, and further the gratification of our desire to eat and drink what pleases us, are pleasures for ourselves alone. The enjoyment of every other sense may be shared; we may read the same book as another, see the same view, feel the same warmth, listen to the same music; but eating and drinking stand alone in this, they cannot be shared. Therefore as far as any pleasure is to be derived from them, it must be a purely selfish pleasure, and for that reason a pleasure which should be very carefully indulged in.

Eating and drinking seem less of a selfish gratification of one's own wants than they are, because the habit has grown up of having "meals," thus making the satisfying of our hunger and thirst an excuse for social gathering together, so that one may feel that others are enjoying themselves at the same time as we are. This excellent arrangement makes it possible to use eating and drinking as a means of making ourselves pleasant to our neighbours, of denying ourselves for the good of others, of giving and taking mentally and physically.

The plan of taking our meals together originated then not for the purpose of eating and drinking—we could do that as well, or better, alone—but for convenience in serving, and so that while eating and drinking we might by communion with others forget ourselves and the satisfying of our own desires. The "common" meal has therefore something social in its very essence, it is not primarily for the purpose of eating and drinking. If we can once appreciate this, we can see just how far we ought to go in considering "the pleasures of the table". We ought to go just to

the length of seeing that where we have any responsibility in the matter we ought to do our best to provide good and nice food, we ought to go as far as we like in considering it for others, we ought to stop short of considering it for ourselves. By the practice of taking meals "in common" the advantage arises that eating and drinking—in themselves purely selfish acts—can thus be made occasions for self-control, courtesy and thoughtfulness for others.

There is a quality of self-control, one which is sadly lacking in boys and young men, and which at the same time is more essential to one's character, more typical of one's degree of advancement, than most of the more usually recognised virtues. It is a quality different from the courtesy and unselfishness which ought to influence us in our dealings with others at meal times, for it is as essential to our behaviour when we dine alone as when we dine in company. It is the refinement, the species of self-control, which makes us "stop when we have had enough," and further, and much more important, which makes us know when we have had enough.

This lesson once learned we shall find that our "enough" comes at a much earlier stage than it did before we appreciated the force of what the lesson teaches. Many a lad or young man thinks that if in eating and drinking he stops short of taking what other people might want, he is doing all that could possibly be asked of him. This is a step, and I am free to confess that, so far are we behind the ideal in our treatment of the affairs of our appetite, it is a step which nearly every lad has to make an effort to take. But I want to put the matter still higher, I want to show how necessary it is to discipline one's self in this and other like matters for the sake not only of the personal wishes of others but for the sake of one's own character.

One is sitting at table with several other people: among other things there is perhaps some vegetable of which one is particularly fond, say asparagus. It is early in the season for it and the quantity is not large, but—if the step of which I have spoken above has been taken—one does not think of taking more than one's just share. But suppose one is,

for some reason, dining alone, one might feel it quite legitimate to empty the dish.

It is in the stopping short of emptying the dish, in the saying to one's self that to take more than a reasonable quantity because the thing is nice is to eat without restraint and therefore to eat like a pig, that this effort at self-discipline for the good of one's own character comes in. We all want to learn, boys and men alike, that it is good for our characters to do deliberately what we do not like, quite apart from any obvious or immediate result from so acting. I do not mean to suggest that we ought to be always practising this form of self-discipline. One is not always exercising one set of muscles or always using one's brain in a fixed direction. But I do suggest that we ought so to live, so to act, that it becomes a mere matter of habit to us to stop short just at the right moment.

Habit means nothing but this: that action becomes instinctive because the effort which causes the action has been so regularly taken that it becomes in itself a habit. Everything that we do instinctively has, at some time,

somewhere, cost an effort, whether it be to ourselves or to a many times great-grandparent matters not. The action is a habit to us because the effort was made and was persisted in until the action had made for itself a groove which it can scarcely get out of. A man cannot instinctively show self-control and self-denial in a crisis unless he has habituated himself deliberately to individual acts of self-discipline in such fashion that he has himself so completely in hand that it comes as natural to him to act promptly and unselfishly as it does to him to wind up his watch when he goes to bed.

The affairs of our appetite are so many opportunities for the practice of self-discipline, and yet they are the one region into which this practice comes least; and this omission causes grievous results. Many English lads value the fact that it is better for the character to lie on a hard bed than on a soft one, to take a cold bath than a warm one, but for some reason they do not extend this appreciation to the question of food, they do not value the fact that it is a good thing to deny one's

self deliberately, even of an indulgence which could in itself hurt no one, for the sake of strengthening one's own character, of increasing one's own power of resistance, when that indulgence happens to be an indulgence in things to eat and drink.

If boys could but learn this lesson, and surely it is not difficult to see its worth, things that they eat and drink would assume a very different aspect. It could not be wrong to think an article of food delicious if its deliciousness were not regarded as a reason for eating as much of it as one possibly can; one must eat and drink, that the thing to be eaten or drunk happens, besides being wholesome, to be nice—even to be the nicest thing we ever tasted—makes no additional reason for our eating, it only makes a reason for our enjoying what we are eating.

CHAPTER III.

I HAVE been at the pains of drawing a high ideal (though let me say at once none too high) so as to be able the more easily to show the difference between what might be and what is. Any one who has seen schoolboys dine, or, even more, take their breakfast and tea, will be able to see this difference with ease. A boy home for the holidays the other day was asked why he put so much butter, jam or marmalade, as the case might be, on his plate at once, why he did not take a reasonable helping and then more if he wanted it and thus avoid so often leaving some. "I'm afraid I get into that habit at school," was his anwer, "if a fellow doesn't take the most he may want at first he won't get another chance." This answer is as typical as one can want of the spirit that pervades the meals at school, "every one for himself, and the devil take the hindermost," and his own fault when he does

get so caught; that is to say that if a boy be unselfish and courteous he will not get enough to eat. This is a bad state of affairs looked at from either the physical or the moral point of view, and there is only one way of curing it: to bring forward the social aspect of meals and sink the gratifying of the appetite aspect of them.

To call the average school meal a "social function" would indeed be a misnomer, there is, as a rule, neither refinement nor courtesy to be seen. The way the meals are served is bad; the way they are received is worse. Now the reason why refinement should be insisted upon is this: we have within us certain faculties of appreciation with which our lower or less developed nature has nothing to do, these faculties live in a very different part of our mind to where live our natural instincts, and it is only in developing these faculties that our chance lies of subduing our lower selves; and moreover it is only in developing these faculties that we show our superiority to the "beasts that perish". If we did not possess this power of being for

ever capable of grasping at something just out of our reach, until by persistent reaching we get it, we should be content to satisfy our appetite by herding round a trough and guzzling out of it. But we are not pigs, we are creatures who, along with the hunger and thirst which we share with pigs, possess an appreciation of the method in which a thing ought to be done, the importance of which far surpasses the importance of the actual doing of it. And this it is which we call refinement, and this it is without which people approximate to brute beasts in so far as they are without it. This is what civilisation means, to be refined, to have stretched out hands not in vain. Only by being civilised can we be better than ourselves. Only by realising that contentment with ourselves as we are is the stultifying of all our powers of development and of improvement can we hope to be able to arrive at anything. This is what Idealism means; that we always have it in our power to do something better than we have hitherto dreamed of as possible; we do not realise the end we are striving for;

only by continually striving, by continually reaching higher, we grasp at last something which seemed, which in fact was, out of our reach. The finest work that has been done in the world, whether in art, in science or in any other direction, has been done because its performers were able to feel and know that outside any vision, beyond any appreciation of which they were capable, lies a world of possibilities which we can never hope to compass but by this idealistic impulse which presses ever on to a highest, because we know that somewhere the highest is to be found.

The highest form of civilisation, of idealism, is Religion, the power of pressing on to an infinitely high ideal in and through Christ; but even without Religion, even for the souls who have not reached that stage of civilisation where Religion is a thing to be desired, to be reached for, there is much advancement to be found, much improvement to be hoped for by the development in ourselves of idealism, of this power which is latent in us all: the power of seeing more than is to be seen with the eyes,

of hearing more than is to be heard with the ears.

To do a thing is one matter, to do it well is quite another, to aim at doing it in the very best possible way in which it can be done is a quite different matter still, and this is what I mean when I say that doing a thing is less important than the way in which it is done.

Boys are not taught refinement at school, they are not taught the reason for refinement elsewhere, and the consequence is that any refinement which a young man learns is apt to be very superficial and dependent for its degree on the company in which he finds himself. It is generally acquired by imitation either of men who have had a true education in this matter from other sources than that of a public school, or of the ladies with whom he associates. I have the less hesitation in pressing this matter, because it is quite possible to alter the whole system of the feeding arrangements at school without very much difficulty. The carving could be all done off the boys' tables, the servants could be made to wait properly, the spilling of food on the table, the leaving of food

on the plates, could be made reportable and punishable offences. Masters could sit with the boys—it is a most obviously wrong element of the system that they do not—and insist on proper behaviour and gentlemanly and refined manners. These reforms could be introduced and would meet and subdue the mischief at once. As to carving itself, one word I should like to say; for bad carving—such carving as one usually sees in schools—is evidence of want of refinement and of waste. It means more waste than any one has any idea of until he sees two similar joints manipulated respectively by a good and by a bad carver. The consequence of bad and careless carving is that boys have more meat given them than is good for them, they either eat it all, which is gluttonous, or they leave some of it on their plates, which is wasteful. The men-servants ought to carve and be made to carve well, not the masters or the prefects; no one ought to carve for a large party who has also his own dinner to get, especially when, added to getting his own dinner, he ought to be seeing that the rest of the party are being properly served

and are behaving themselves in a reasonable manner.

It will take a generation or two before we can hope to see that refinement at our school meals, the lack of which is such a blot on our boys' education, because the masters themselves have been educated in a manner which takes but little count of such refinement. But we might make a start, and men might begin to see where lack of refinement means a hiatus in education, and, by seeing the necessity of alteration, set to work to get at a better appreciation of the way in which meals should be served and taken.

The possibility of getting more refinement into school meals is obvious, to insist upon courtesy and self-restraint is a more difficult task. But, at any rate, the arrangements of the meals, the supervision of them, might be such that boys who have learnt good manners at home could on coming to school find there encouragement to courteous and self-restrained behaviour. As it is, a boy is almost forced into selfishness and gluttony at his school meals, and a lad who has been brought up to

consider others before himself, who has learnt in his earlier years to put the right value on food, finds himself obliged, in self-defence, to fall in with the standard that obtains at school.

As to the food itself, there is apparently very much that is faulty here. Any school that does not provide its boys with sufficient food, and food of a sufficiently nourishing and wholesome quality to keep those boys in the best possible state of health, is falling far short of its duty. I know of two public schools where the boys are quite properly fed, as to the quality of the food (in both schools the style of serving and waiting leave very much to be desired), and I have *heard* of very many schools where the boys are not properly fed. I should like to say here that the popular idea that boys are given to complaining at home of the food which they get at their schools is a false one, they are apt to grumble among themselves whether the food be good or bad, but, as a general thing, a boy never complains at home of the way he is fed at school unless he is directly questioned. One may gather from things a boy lets drop, from

"reading between the lines," what are the advantages and disadvantages of this or that particular school, but to get any real idea of it from a boy while he is still at the school is a very rare feat to accomplish, unless with direct questioning, which is a course all sensible parents shrink from.

However there are other, and far more trustworthy methods, of learning the truth about schools than by the boys themselves talking about it, and there does not rest in my own mind a shadow of doubt that at many public schools the food is not what it might be, and that in all public schools the standard of refinement in the manner in which it is served and eaten falls far below any standard with which we ought to be content.

CHAPTER IV.

It seems to me suitable to add here a chapter on boys' "allowances," although it does not appear at first sight to belong altogether to the subject of the foregoing chapters, to which I shall return. I cannot help thinking that the reason why many young men have to buy their experience on money matters so dearly is that the value of money is so very little a part of their education as boys. It is difficult to make boys at school understand the art of spending money, because they get so few opportunities of spending it sensibly. A boy is given a certain amount of loose cash to take back to school, almost on the understanding that he is going to spend it on rubbish. There are two ways in which a boy usually spends his money at school, on things to eat, and in buying his schoolfellows' belongings. It is astonishing what an utter fool a boy of sixteen can prove himself to be

in the way of spending money. Out of, say, three or four pounds which he may take to school with him, he will spend a third or more on "grub" and the rest in buying things which his schoolfellows do not want themselves and which are of no possible use to him. A boy at school is *expected* to spend money; why else is it given to him? And at school it is much easier for him to spend it foolishly than sensibly.

I think that every boy, while as young as possible for it to be wise (one knows that boys vary much in development of character), ought to have a cheque-bank account, so that he can order things by post if necessary; and that he should be given an allowance sufficient to buy all his smaller articles of clothing, etc., and as soon as possible should be put in a position to buy all his necessaries. If boys have a banking account the temptation to spend is not nearly so great as when they have loose money for ever burning holes in their pockets. Of course to follow such a plan as I propose trouble would be needed to teach our boys to be careful, sensible and thrifty. Careful in keeping accounts and in not leaving their bank-books and

papers about; sensible in apportioning their money to their various wants; thrifty in not getting into debt, and in saving for necessary and reasonable expenses. Can we say that any part of a boy's education which taught him these qualities could be too highly valued? Are not carelessness, stupidity and extravagance the rocks on which many and many a young man is wrecked directly he comes into possession of money?

It is not as if young men could be prevented altogether from having money; at some time of their lives they must be put into possession of, given control over, some sort of income; and can we be in the least surprised that most of them get into some kind of trouble, considering that their education as boys, while fostering in them all manner of expensive tastes, entirely omits to teach them the value and control of money?

A normal boy on leaving his public school for the university will suddenly be put into possession of anything from £200 to £500 a year, when very probably before this he has never had any money but pocket-money which

his parents tacitly assume is given to him to "fritter". A lad is absolutely *expected* to waste money until he is eighteen or nineteen years of age, and then he is turned over into circumstances where, if he waste it, he must come to grief. When we remember that many boys come away from school, not only with no idea of the right value of money, but actually with the idea that being in debt is rather a desirable state of affairs, and one likely to be admired by their companions, we must not blame the lads so much as the system of their education for the consequences which are apt to follow.

I am inclined to think that much of the mischief of the "grub" question is due to the fact of boys having loose money in their pockets and nothing sensible to spend it on. Most boys up to an advanced age, indeed until they are quite young men, regard pocket-money primarily for the purpose of buying "grub". Girls have their "allowances" for their little articles of apparel and so forth, and they are not supposed, and as a rule do not, spend any appreciable part of it on things to eat; but of course girls are, or at any rate used to be,

much more at home than boys, and within the reach of advice and of the necessary shops; now that girls are educated so much at school, I have no doubt that, among the many advantages of their better education, this disadvantage of losing the sense of the right value of money will arise. And I offer the suggestion of encouraging girls and boys alike to keep a cheque-bank account as a help in this difficulty.

Every one knows the advantage of the cheque-bank system in dealing with small sums such as children use; the responsibility of a bank account, the knowledge that what is not spent is kept for future use would be all to the good. As it is at present, boys feel that if they do not spend the money which they take back for the term, it will just rattle about in their pockets or get lost, and that if their people at home find that they have some left, the only consequence will be that they won't get so much next time!

No doubt the opportunities for spending money in a sensible manner vary in different schools; at some the elder boys are allowed to "shop" in the nearest town, at others the boys are forbidden the town altogether, at others

again there is no town near enough to prove either a resource or a temptation. But, in any case, the boy with loose cash in his pocket is apt to turn most naturally to sweet things for its expenditure, and I am inclined to believe that if boys, as a rule, were responsible for providing certain necessaries and given an allowance for this purpose that (even without the advantage of the bank-account) their money would be spent to far better purpose.

There is no doubt that much of the way in which boys regard sweet eating is due to the line taken about it by grown-up people, by the sort of grown-up person, for instance, who gives a boy half a crown and tells him to "cut away and make a little beast of himself at the nearest tuck-shop," but even if we could get a better standard in this respect, we could not hope to see boys spending money properly until they have been taught that it is wicked to use what many others are needing so sadly unless a proper return is being got from the expenditure.

It is not difficult to see, it would be unjust not to acknowledge, that it is the home which is chiefly responsible for the lack of education

on the right value of money, the results of which are often so grievous in the after life of boys. But, even so, there is much that school might do to encourage where home is giving the proper means of wise expenditure.

There are two suggestions that I should like to be allowed to offer. First, that where the school grub-shop is under the control of the boys themselves, and where the profits go to the games, or other school fund, an end should be put to such an arrangement (a usual one in public schools) at once. The consequences of it *must* be bad, the arrangement itself must, by its very nature, encourage boys to spend large sums of their money on "grub".

Secondly, I would very strongly advocate the institution of school banks, where boys could deposit their money, and which could be opened by one of the masters, say, twice a week. It may be that such banks exist in some schools.—I do not know of them,—but I am convinced that if they were general in our public schools, and if boys were definitely encouraged to deposit their money in them, it would be an immense help against the foolish waste that at present pre-

vails. The Post-Office Savings Bank is practically no use in the case of which I am at present writing, because of the difficulty and delay in drawing money from one's account. Boys want somewhere to keep their loose money, their tips and so forth, where, while easily to be got at, it is in safe keeping meanwhile. The fact that most boys have loose money lying about produces far more evil than appears at first sight. There are many degrees on the road between absolute uprightness and downright dishonesty, and any schoolboy could tell us that the latter is not unknown in even the best schools. If boys could find at school a real effort on the part of authority to encourage in them the carefulness about money matters, which is only another name for honesty, I most firmly believe that most of them would gladly respond to it.

Carefulness in money matters is not meanness; carelessness is not generosity. We shall not teach our generous-hearted boys to become mean by teaching them how to spend wisely. In school life the careless, or naturally generous boy acts as he does from want of knowledge,

and is consequently at the mercy of the careful, or naturally mean boy. The present standard on money matters among boys and young men encourages the mean boy to be mean, for he finds his generous companions easily gulled, easily imposed upon, owing to their having no real knowledge of money matters and no appreciation of the real value of money.

A few words on debt I want to say. Why do we not teach our boys, almost before we teach them anything else, that it is dishonest to owe money? In any public school about half the boys owe money to the other half. It surely cannot be very difficult to make a boy see that if he has money in his possession which he owes to some one else, it is just as dishonest to put his hand into his pocket and take the money out and spend it, as it would be if he put his hand in his neighbour's pocket and abstracted money therefrom for the same purpose. Hundreds of boys leave school at the end of the term owing money to their schoolfellows which they intend to pay back "sometime," and meanwhile they will happily spend money which is no more theirs than is the money in

the till of the shop in which they are making their purchases.

Boys, from sheer thoughtlessness, from absolute lack of any knowledge on the subject, get into absurd entanglements at school; as a general thing their parents hear nothing of these affairs; the masters are, unless the matter gets very serious, delightfully ignorant; among the boys themselves the losses and "bad debts" are taken philosophically; as a general thing, if one could get the whole business disentangled, the boys would come out fairly even. But when the lads come to go into a wider sphere, and when they bring with them these loose ideas about money, the effects at once are far more disastrous. Debt then must mean something far more serious, and is apt eventually to bring the serious punishment which its true name, dishonesty, really deserves.

CHAPTER V.

I SHOULD like to insist that parents ought not to allow for an instant longer the fact that their boys are ill fed at school: there is no need that it should be the fact.

It costs from 5s. to 7s. a week a head to feed a number of boys. The lesser sum will give boys from the age of eight to fourteen three good meals a day, fish or eggs or bacon and so forth at breakfast; soup, meat and pudding (two helpings of each) at dinner; tea, bread and butter, cake or jam for tea; it will also provide a slice of bread and butter in the mid-morning and again in the mid-afternoon. For older boys, who have perhaps supper in the evening, 7s. would be an outside price per head. This means that it should not cost more than £4 11s. a term per boy to feed a school. Now we can see by this that the food is the least expensive item in a schoolboy's "keep". Say that the fees are £25 a term,

four-fifths of that sum goes to providing the boy with his education and to the keeping up of the place. If one-fifth of what parents pay for their boy's schooling is enough to feed him well, should they not insist that this is done?

I have taken a low average of fees, because —as far as I can gather—it is in the average school that there is most cause for complaint. In the public schools where the fees are comparatively low, however, it is not assumed that these fees cover the expenses, there is always at these schools a large "foundation" which is understood to make the school partly a charitable institution, so in any case there should be money enough to insure the boys being well fed; if there is not, then all I can say is that the school had better give up the business. But there is money enough, the thing that is lacking is care and conscience. The proportion of the fees which we pay for our boys' food at school goes largely into the pockets of servants and tradespeople. When our boys do not get sufficiently nourishing food at school, it does not mean that the funds of the school will not allow of the

expense, it means that the money that ought to go in buying food goes into the pockets of unscrupulous people. Nowhere is the "percentage" system so flourishing as at many, I cannot think I should be wrong in saying at most, of our public schools, and it is only in the catering department that it can obtain to any great extent.

The arrangement of the feeding of the boys and the serving of them at meals is left in exactly the wrong hands. It ought to be the direct business of some gentlewoman of experience, sympathy and conscience to see to the housekeeping, it ought to be the direct business of her male counterpart to see to the work of the men-servants. As it is, the former is usually left to the direction of a woman who can, if she be so minded, "make her pile" out of percentages from the tradespeople, while the serving department is under the control of a butler who arranges things to please himself, and who, in many schools, counts on "making his pile" out of the profit he acquires in providing eatables of the boys' own ordering.

For this mistake it should not be difficult to find a remedy, even less so than in the case of the mistake that is made in most schools of allowing the boys to grow into careless and slovenly behaviour at meals. It makes just all the difference whether these matters of housekeeping, catering and the like are under the immediate direction of a person of educated conscience or not. It was my lot once to audit the accounts of two establishments for the same year. One was a private school, where the boys were fed as well as possible, one was a private convalescent home where the feeding was also excellent. In one case the numbers of the household were fifty lads and twenty-two grown-up people, in the other the numbers were fifty grown-up people (of the poorer class). In one case the housekeeper was a woman of strict and educated conscience—I knew her well; in the other the housekeeper was unknown to me personally; both these establishments were in the same small town, both dealt with the same tradespeople, in the latter case the expenses were more than half as much again as in the former,

Where did the difference go? And where does this difference go in the schools? In waste, no doubt, much of it, but more in "percentages". But whether it be in waste or in percentages, it is very obvious to every person who gives the question honest thought, that it is not right to take money for one purpose and allow it to be spent on another. It may be that in the economy of any establishment the directors of it may think it reasonable to say when arranging expenses, "So much we must allow for waste, and tradesmen's and servants' percentages," but even if people choose to work on such a system as this, the sum that is devoted to that purpose ought to be over and above the sum provided for housekeeping purposes, which ought to be expended honestly in providing suitable food for the household. If the sum set aside for this purpose is not large enough to cover both the legitimate and the illegitimate outlay, then either the sum should be made larger or the illegitimate outlay should be stopped.

My own personal experience of many years

tells me that if boys are well and wholesomely fed, they do not, as a general thing, crave for sweet things, that is if they are leading a healthy and wholesome life. Why should they? If they did it would be contrary to all natural precedent. We do not want to use our minds simultaneously on sense and on trash. If we keep our bodies in good condition by exercise and reasonable athletics we have no inclination to "slack" in our leisure time. And if a boy is giving his digestion proper work to do, he will instinctively avoid hampering its operations by stuffing himself with unwholesome and useless matter.

I have worked my way round again to my text, the grub-shop. Let us abolish the grub-shop by the simple method of making it unnecessary.

CHAPTER VI.

I HAVE purposely avoided in the foregoing chapters any but quite indirect allusions to drinking, because I wished to keep that subject free for another chapter, and because I wished to make it a text for a diatribe against boys drinking any spirituous liquid at all.

I think that I cannot be considered to be going beyond the truth when I say that if all boys were brought up with the express condition that they were not to taste spirituous liquor in any form until they were twenty years of age, drunkenness would be reduced about seventy-five per cent.

I also believe that I am right in saying that in all public schools boys, from the age of twelve or fourteen onwards, are allowed to drink beer with their dinner and supper; therefore I think I may start with the premiss for my subsequent argument that most young men have learnt to acquire the taste for stimu-

lants at school; and that for the habit of drinking, in most of those that do drink, their schools are responsible.

There are many temperance and total abstinence advocates, societies, and so on, some very rabid and some ostentatiously moderate in their expressions, and no doubt they, one and all, persuade a certain few drunkards and drinkers to lead sober lives. No doubt some of them do good work—I suppose there is not quite so much alcohol consumed as there would be if no temperance societies existed, no speeches were ever made, no meetings ever held—and yet it is hard to cling to even this mild supposition when one sees it proved how the commerce of spirituous liquor increases and develops year by year. Drink is a curse; there it is clear and plain, and we have it shouted at us, and whispered at us, preached and printed at us, and still brewers and publicans and wine-merchants are the most prosperous of trades-folk; still our country thrives on the revenues which are due to the consumption of spirituous liquor all over the country. Why is this? surely the

shouting is loud enough, the whispers sufficiently insinuating, surely the preachers and teachers are earnest, surely, oh, surely, their cause is a good one.

We shall never cure drunkenness, we shall not touch the outside fringe of this great curse, by preaching to those who get drunk. Men have a right to get drunk if they choose. Our only chance lies in bringing up our boys in such fashion that they regard the question of the use and abuse of alcohol wisely and with a full knowledge of the effect which its use has.

To do this our main object should be to face the whole matter boldly ourselves. We are afraid of saying that boys should not drink for fear lest, on looking up our reasons why they should not drink, we should be forced to the conclusion that we ought not to drink ourselves. A man with young lads at school does not like to debar them from beer and wine in the holidays when he is accustomed to accompany his own meal with drinking. But is not this cowardice? *Whatever* conclusion we may come to, are we not bound to look the matter fairly and squarely in the face?

Whatever may be one's own feelings on the general question of "Temperance," it cannot be surely difficult to see that stimulant is not a necessity to a growing boy. There is no doctor who makes a speciality of children who will order a growing lad alcohol, though there is many an old-fashioned practitioner who has an idea that beer and stout are suitable "aids to the young". I picked up a book the other day called (I believe), *How to Manage our Little Ones;* it dated to some fifty years ago, and this is an extract: "For this kind of cold a glass of port or of stout at eleven o'clock is a capital preventive". This was in speaking of children in the nursery! Is it surprising that some of us have inherited a craving for strong drink? As I said about boys eating sweet things, there is the physical aspect and there is the moral aspect of this matter to be considered, and the two are more closely interwoven here than in the other case. Alcohol affects the brain and the stomach, and the advantages which may be gained in its moderate use by adults are nowhere to be found when it is considered with reference to growing lads. I

do not mean to say that a glass of beer in the day does a boy directly any harm physically, but indirectly it does him this harm, it accustoms his stomach to the action of alcohol, and it accustoms his system to the "prop" which alcohol gives; and, almost of more importance still, when a boy gets into the habit of drinking beer, he very soon gets a distaste for water, which naturally all children like. *No boy has ever been the better physically for drinking any spirituous liquor whatever.* I lay that down as a maxim founded on long experience of boys, and I will defy any one to disprove it. A boy's tastes are bound to grow with his growth if they are the tastes of the developed man. A boy who wants one glass of beer at fourteen will want two at sixteen, four at twenty, and then, when the power of the effect of stimulants has hold of him, he will begin to find that he must take wine or spirit, so as to get more quality into the quantity. There is a peculiarity about the taste for stimulants which is at once its great advantage and disadvantage, it is an acquired

taste. The usual reasons why boys begin to drink are either because other boys do it, or because they think it is "manly," or because they feel instinctively its hidden influence; boys feel that there is about alcohol a glamour, a "knowledge of good and evil," they instinctively regard it as a door leading to unknown territory where much is to be learned.

If boys could be left to themselves in this matter, if the influence of example and opportunity were not constantly before them, nine-tenths of them would never drink anything alcoholic; even as it is there is a good percentage of boys, one in ten I should think, whose dislike of the taste of beer, wine and spirits is so pronounced that it outweighs all the considerations I have mentioned. And the fact remains that most of our young men have acquired the taste for strong drink while they were so young that the taste was bound to have at first nothing but a fictitious value for them.

I have heard people say about drink what I have heard them say about other things: that it is a mistake to keep a boy too strictly

in this respect, for if one does he is sure to break out into excess when he gets older. This theory is—both about drink and other of manhood's excesses—at once perfectly false and perfectly true. If one sets out to keep young things away from and out of sight of dangers, on the theory that ignorance will eventually become innocence, we and they are bound to come to grief. If, on the other hand, one's education of one's children includes a clear knowledge of the evil and of the good of every course which will be open to them as their life progresses, we must indeed have a strange creed and a paltry faith if we cannot see that by the clear light of knowledge, in the growing strength of development, choice ought to mean to a lad rejecting evil wherever he comes across it.

But when people class drink with other evil which spells ruin to a young man, when they speak of the danger of keeping young men too closely because of the reaction which subsequently takes place, they are quite wrong in putting drink side by side with lust. For, as I said before, love of drink is not inherent

in human nature, and lust is. A boy or man does not drink spirituous liquor for the first time because a desire of his human nature is craving for gratification. The *reasons* which induce his thus drinking are inherent in human nature, a wish to "be in the swim" with other young men, a fear of being less thought of by his companions; but if a lad be brought up a strict abstainer (even on the criminal system of making rules for children without telling them why they are to be kept) there is much less risk here than there is in the forcing of unenlightened restraint upon boys in regard to *natural* wishes and desires.

It has always been a puzzle to me why schoolmasters make such a point of boys not smoking, and none of their not drinking. We are not anxious for a system of education which allows and encourages boys to smoke, but are we not indeed straining at a gnat and swallowing a camel when we cane a boy for smoking a pipe and put before him at lunch, dinner and supper a glass of beer? I think it is a fair analogy to put one glass of beer, or glass

of wine, or tablespoonful of spirit on a level with one pipe. The "ordinary" smoker would smoke about six pipes a day, the "ordinary" drinker would drink about six glasses of beer or wine or "small whiskies," and I cannot be beside the mark when I say that the first glass of beer may as surely start a boy off in the road of the habitual and excessive drinker as his first pipe might start him in that of the habitual and excessive smoker.

Both smoking and drinking are acquired habits, both are indulged in by boys for the same reasons; in each the danger lies in the chance of the power it may get while the character is still plastic, while the tastes are yet unformed, in the certainty that the taste must grow with the lad's growth. Smoking at schools is made a punishable offence, is treated with great severity; drinking is allowed and encouraged.

I know that many will say that I am going far beyond the truth when I say that drinking is allowed and encouraged in schools, and that it is ridiculous to put the drinking of a few glasses of beer on a par with getting drunk.

But I never said that boys were encouraged to get drunk at school, I said that they were encouraged to take the preliminary steps in that direction, by the mere fact of their being allowed to drink any beer at all while they were boys. I think that the beer is often what is commonly called "swipes," *i.e.*, small or weak beer, makes the matter in a way worse: it is like pretending to the boys that they are behaving like men, tasting the edge of a manly vice, while making the actual thing as innocuous as may be, consistently with the appearance of the genuine and harmful thing. This seems to me one of the most forcible arguments one could have in proving what a mischievous thing it is that boys should have beer at all. It is as though one said: "I will not give my son the full evil he asks for, for I will not run the risk while he is with me of the consequences if I should grant it, but I will give him an imitation of the evil, near enough to deceive him in his inexperience, and so I will satisfy him with this until he goes on into a wider sphere where he must encounter the reality". Can one imagine that boys ever

value the fact that the beer is weak? When a boy gets a chance of drinking stronger beer away from school or in the holidays does he not take it? The beer which is provided at school is, as a rule, scarcely strong enough to affect the boys' heads in a manner that would draw attention, but it is quite strong enough to give them a taste for something stronger.

CHAPTER VII.

I DO not think that it ought to be a difficult thing to bring up boys in such a manner that strong drink would not have for them, when they become young men, the factitious value with which most men invest it.

To a boy, who has been educated on this question in such a manner that he thinks the state of being drunk shameful and degrading, beer, wine and spirits assume a very different place in his regard from what they find in most boys' minds. We think it funny (the Lord alone knows why) for people to be drunk or to swear. We go to a play: however dull the story may be a "damn" will raise a smile. A man reeling tipsily about the stage will always give amusement. As long as this is so, can we hope for any right standard on the subject? It is undoubtedly funny to see a man at a certain stage of intoxication, but it is quite as funny to see a person at a certain

stage of imbecility, but we should scarcely dare to make capital of fun out of an imbecile on the stage. It is not in the fact alone of its being funny that the representation of drunkenness in this light appeals to us; other things are funny in circumstances in which shame or pity governs our sense of amusement; it is that by treating this question of drunkenness in this way one escapes the necessity of looking at it in its true light. It is in thus treating it that we lose one of our best chances of getting our lads to see the real, *inward* shamefulness of deliberately renouncing our hold on our minds and on our actions.

Men, owing to the species of training which they get as boys, are endowed with a wonderful measure of self-control where they choose to exert it, but, owing to the miserable standard which they possess on certain matters, they so often do not choose to exert it where it is most necessary. And when an action has become a habit it requires more than self-control to leave it off. Most men get themselves into the habit of drinking just

as much as they dare; that is to say, they drink just as much as the standard to which their education has accustomed them allows them to drink. It is astonishing to reflect that many men can live their lives in this fashion, never getting drunk, but continually going just to the verge: this implies wonderful self-control. I think, to prove my case, I have only to point out that if a young man begins to drink wine at, say, one and twenty, two glasses of wine or so will bring him to the desired pitch of exhilaration, while by the time he is thirty he would be found at his dinner gradually reaching the necessary point through sherry, hock, champagne and port, and perhaps at the age of forty supplementing all these with a stiff whisky and soda before joining the ladies in the drawing-room, who are waiting to be edified with the result of this assistance to the gentleman's wits. A man of forty is no nearer being "drunk" with eight or ten glasses of wine and a whisky to settle them than he was on his two glasses of sherry when he was a young fellow of two or three and twenty,

but he needs more to make it have the same effect. No doubt there is pleasure in the taste of wine to the confirmed drinker, but this, as I said earlier, is an acquired taste. Men like wine because they drink it, they do not drink it because they like it. Apart from its alcoholic properties who would dream, for instance, of drinking whisky as a pleasant beverage? And yet by constant persistence in its use, no doubt men do become attached to the taste of whisky.

Now I think many might say at this point: "Well, supposing that what you have said is true, how do you show the harm of drinking to this extent, provided that men do not lose control of their wits?"

The harm is twofold. First, there is the question of expense, and this is a great harm, far greater than appears at first sight. There is many and many a young man, whom no one would dream of calling intemperate, who must lose a very great deal by the fact that he considers the taking a certain amount of strong drink so much a foregone conclusion that it never occurs to him that in taking his glass of

beer at lunch and at supper he is preventing himself from, say, taking a holiday once a year, or buying himself a dress suit. It seems a ridiculous thing to say, but the young man in London, or in any big town, who has not a dress suit is almost bound to deteriorate; but it is not so ridiculous when one puts it in this way, that a young man who has not the *entrée* to society which includes the presence of cultivated and refined gentlemen and ladies, is bound, unless he is a bookworm, to drift to unworthy society, and—if he is a bookworm —to lose a very great deal of grace and sunshine out of life. The young man working in London, who takes his meals at a restaurant, will spend over £5 a year if he takes no more than two glasses of beer a day; and when—owing to his sedentary life—he has to consult a doctor, who (unthinking creature!) orders him to drop beer and drink whisky (instead of ordering him to stop drinking alcohol altogether and buy dress clothes and a bicycle!), he will spend £18 a year, and need be drinking no more than two whiskies and sodas a day. And are many young men quite so moderate

as this? Even when they are clerks, with such small pay that the dress suit or the annual holiday in the country are matters of serious pecuniary difficulty to them? And then there is this: for every man who possesses the necessary self-control to stop short at the point of getting "drunk" there is one who does not; men march together to that point, the point where the precipice comes, half, we will say, stop at the brink, half tumble over, and on this march men are always and for ever encouraging each other to press forward, to keep in the ranks. I cannot help firmly believing that, at the bottom of their souls, most young men who drink at all, as a practice, know that they are doing a wrong thing, or rather that they are acting from a wrong motive, or else why should men be so persuasive, so insistent, so *tiresome* when their neighbours prefer to abstain? Further, there is this harm in what people call "moderate drinking," men who accompany every social meeting, all genial or friendly intercourse, with drinking, get eventually to depend entirely upon drink for any capacity of showing sociable-

ness or geniality; they cannot be witty or even heartily friendly, often they cannot be commonly courteous until they have primed themselves with alcohol, until the drinking of it has produced a temporary excitement, which combined with a temporary "hail-fellow-well-met" sort of feeling makes men ready to make themselves pleasant to their neighbours. But what an insult to our friends such a course of proceeding is. Are our friends to wait to be amused, to be entertained, to be sympathised with by us, until we can do it under the influence of wine? Are they to feel that if they meet us at a restaurant, or the play, or a dinner-party, our powers of entertaining them lie entirely in the decanters and spirit flasks? Am I saying too much? Will any of my readers who considers himself as a "moderate drinker," and who is a constant diner-out, try going to these dinner-parties and other festivities for a week without touching any spirituous liquor during that time, and will he then see upon what depends his popularity with society? He will discover that great as may have been the effort he

made to stay his drinking on this side of the line which custom recognises between sobriety and drunkenness, it will be small compared to that which he has to make to "keep up to the mark" without the assistance which he has accustomed himself to look for in drinking.

Under these circumstances we need not look far to discover why young men are apt to give as the reason why other people should drink that it is so "unsociable" if they do not. But apart from any instinctive feeling that it is not altogether pleasant to have our neighbour quite sober, in full possession of his faculties, unstimulated from any outside influence, there is this further reason why young men get into the way of looking on drinking as sociable: young lads have one most charming, almost idyllic quality, they love their kind; they love each other with a whole-hearted, generous, admiring affection which may have its weak spots when analysed, but which in the main is the thing which holds the world together. When a young man meets his friend, be he in whatever station of life, the poorest-bred

"'Arry" or a "prince of the blood," his first instinct is to make himself pleasant for the sheer reason that he wants to give pleasure. And custom has always ready at his elbow the beer, the wine, the spirit which he knows from association can put him and his friend into a genial, "give and take" frame of mind at once. It takes a lad but a short acquaintance with the effects of drinking any strong drink to discover that with its aid he can, without any effort on his own part, make himself pleasant to his neighbours, and the consequence is that two young men out for the day together, who might be dull and morose if they had forgotten the basket containing the wine and the beer, would be as jolly as sandboys if they could see their way to breaking the promise they made their sweethearts of not going into a public house.

I have put forth much which looks as though my object in writing about boys' drinking was to preach total abstinence for all. And I should like to say here, not because I think it is of any importance to my readers, but because I am afraid lest in seeming to preach

total abstinence for all I may estrange some who would otherwise be inclined to listen to my pleading that our boys should not be allowed to acquire the habit of drinking while they are young, that as to the question of total abstinence for all, I do not feel myself in any way capable of pronouncing an opinion: I believe it to be a question (as to our grown-up case) for every man's separate conscience and every man's separate circumstances. But I do think, as I have implied earlier, that it is downright cowardly to ignore the question of whether boys ought to be allowed strong drink only because we shirk a possible conclusion unpleasant to ourselves. Paternity brings in its train much of self-sacrifice and self-denial. While we are endeavouring to lay before our boys an ideal of sobriety which may teach them eventually what true temperance means, may it not be perchance that one of our duties is to put ourselves beyond reproach by the exercise of—at any rate while our boys are boys—the self-denial which shows them that, with the view of teaching them this lesson, we can put real restraint upon our-

selves? Our use of wine is not what it ought to be, while men drink for the reasons I have given in this chapter. And to the men who drink with real moderation, the men who "stop short" without difficulty, I want to say this: Is it not definitely unfair to a boy to allow him to acquire a habit while he is young, to which when he is grown-up he will be more or less bound whether he likes it or no? Is it not our bounden duty as educators of the young to see that they grow into no habits but such as may help them to become strong members of the state, able to live better, govern better and work better because of such habits?

And, after all, we do not *want* our boys to drink, even when they are grown-up; and it is surely not straining a point to say that, at any rate, they shall be left to make their own decision when they are grown up. Say that it is not wrong to drink, say even that it is not wrong to get drunk, still—given that the taste for wine and spirits is an acquired taste, given that drinking is of all habits the most difficult, once learnt, to get out of, given that this habit is not one which can be proved universally beneficial

to either the individual or to the state—we may insist that while our boys' characters are still plastic and their minds still unformed they shall not learn to acquire a habit out of which they could not, without much effort, escape by the time that their characters and minds are those of the developed man.

BOOK III.

PURITY.

CHAPTER I.

In thinking of the public-school system as it exists now one has to take into consideration the initial motives from which public schools were first instituted, as well as all the motives to which they—through the years that have passed since the institution of the first public school—owe their development, until we come to dealing with the system as it at present stands.

In the days when large boys' schools were first started, the standard of what we call (for want of a more suitable name) morality was, roughly speaking, this: that a man could not lead a decent life unless he shut himself off entirely from the chance of contact with women. Thus when an institution was founded for the education of boys alone, probably the first instinct that possessed its founders in regarding the future of this institution was to make it as monastic in character as possible. *C'est le premier pas qui coûte*, and this no doubt is

the chief reason why in one respect, a respect on which I wish now to dilate, the public-school system is what it is to-day.

The entire education of the average boy on the subject of women and girls is wrong from his earliest childhood, and nothing fosters the error so much as the standard, in this respect, of the public schools. Boys are taught as children to despise in girls and to hear lightly spoken of in women whatever is different to themselves; and with this disadvantage at the very start of their career, they are launched into a life in which the counteracting of this evil influence by the presence of women has no part.

I have heard it said that schoolboys think very little of women and girls. This is very true: they do not, and consequently they never learn to think rightly, while they are left to *feel* wrongly.

Our only chance of getting any sort of standard of purity into the lives of our boys is by teaching them to think rightly of women and girls, and one can only learn to think rightly of any subject by learning to think highly of it.

Boys are left to develop feelings for the opposite sex which must inevitably lead them wrong unless the feelings are guided and trained by thought. A boy is made to lead a life which practically shuts him off from women until he has reached an age when—owing to this great defect in his education—contact with them is dangerous.

No one can teach boys to respect women but women themselves: if a lad or young man is to emerge into manhood with any right ideas on the subject whatever, it must be because women themselves have put them there. In the present state of affairs, if a boy does grow up to be a pure man he does so—as I said when speaking of unselfishness—in spite of his public-school education, not because of it; he does so because his mother and the women who love him appreciate the fact that school in this respect does worse than nothing for him, and endeavour in the short time left at their disposal to counteract this defect. But—as I said of religion—school might supply this most important factor in a boy's education; a boy might learn at school

to think rightly about women, so that as he grows to be a man he could not feel wrongly.

I find it very difficult not to go over ground which I have already trodden in another book when speaking on this subject. Home life, preparatory school life, public-school life lead into another so closely; and when one is speaking of the lives of boys at public schools one cannot help continually feeling how different they would be if the home life were different; and by ignoring here, as I must, having treated of it elsewhere, how dangerous and foolish is the attitude taken in the home on the relations of boys with girls, I seem to leave a hole in the very beginning of my argument. But even then there is much to be said from the point of view of the public-school system alone, though of course the system is evolved from the temperaments and characteristics of the boys, as they present themselves upon the arena of school life; temperaments and characteristics which have been developed at home, and for which the home-influence is mainly responsible.

In thinking of boys, *quâ* public-school boys

alone, one naturally thinks of the effect which the education they get at school has in the preparation of their characters as young men, and it is in this way that I want to consider this question of the ideas prevalent among boys as to women and girls.

I think the first thing to be said is that a boy's idea is usually that he ought not to think about women and girls at all, consequently when he does think about them or speak about them, a boy does it in a shame-faced sort of fashion; he alludes to women and girls, both in his thoughts and in his words, as if they were creatures of another sphere to his own, and that sphere a rather improper one. What can be the consequence of this, when you add to it the fact that neither boys nor men can help *feeling* about women and girls? Nature insists upon this; and what nature insists upon cannot be denied to it. When a boy is young his feelings are undeveloped; let him be taught in such manner that thought and feeling develop together, and he is given the best chance of being able, when he is older and his feelings become more

prominent, to govern his emotions by trained and developed thought.

What I have said will—on a first reading—sound an exaggeration to many of my readers, but it is a sheer matter of fact. A boy's mother, sisters, feminine relations and friends of all kinds are, as soon as he is in the company of other boys, relegated to a place in his mind where fresh air does not abound. One need not have very much to do with boys to find out how unhealthy is the part of his mind where a boy keeps his ideas of women, by the fact that when, in a school or other community of boys, boys do speak of women and girls as a habit they invariably do it in an unwholesome manner. A boy who has been brought up so that he is devoid of that foolish and unhealthy way of regarding the difference of sex, which is so disastrous to the character of young men, finds when he gets to school that his only course is silence. He would find it impossible, for instance, to speak of the school to which his sisters went, or to talk of his girl friends or relations; even to mention casually any of his older female relations would

have, after the first, to be done with difficulty and with the feeling that some one or other of his audience would be ready with an unpleasing comment. And this would be only because the lad was talking of women. Girls at school, or in a party of other girls, can talk reasonably and naturally of their brothers, their brothers' schools and friends, the parties and dances they go to in the holidays, their own male relations and friends, and there is not the slightest reason why boys should not be able to do as the girls do if once they could be prevented from despising women by having a true knowledge of them, instead of having their minds perverted by the distorted image of the other sex which is all that is presented to their gaze. We shall not have a race of men who live clean and self-controlled lives until we have a race of wholesome-minded boys; and we shall not have a race of wholesome-minded boys until we have produced a system of education for them which includes the ever-present influence of women. As soon as men have learnt that there is nothing to despise in women, as women, except a fault

for which they themselves, as men, are entirely responsible, they will begin to see that by educating their boys to love and reverence women, as human beings, they will be putting before them the one ideal which can prevent them from living lives of selfish indulgence when they are young men.

It seems as though we needed in this world of ours a neutral sex to teach the ethics of purity. As it is, women themselves tacitly concur in a standard of morality which implies the lowering of themselves in the eyes of the men around them. And yet it is women only who can teach that appreciation of themselves which would raise the world's standard of what men's lives ought to be.

The only reason why the influence of women is not included in the system of public-school education of to-day is that men have not learnt in the course of centuries that purity means nothing else than that men and women should think highly of one another, and they can only think highly of one another by knowing one another. The mystery of sex must be existent, but it only bears upon this aspect of the matter

quite indirectly. It is no doubt owing to the fact of the essential difference of sex that this way of regarding women, by men and women alike, has grown up, but none the less the fact remains that the sexual aspect of the case enters directly not at all into the average boy's mind, it is directly in no way the reason why he acts so foolishly in thought and word when he turns them to the regard of women. He acts foolishly in the matter because he acts without reason, without thought and without knowledge. That this reason, this thought and this knowledge has been denied him is no doubt owing to the false ideas of women that obtain in the average mind. The boy has been brought up in an atmosphere which is tainted with these ideas; and has thus been tacitly prepared for a system which has been founded upon these ideas; but in the boy's own mind there is no reference to sex, and a real knowledge of women by real and intimate intercourse with them could produce in him nothing but good.

Later, as the boy grows to be a man, this feeling of the difference of sex does begin to predominate, and at an age when contact and

intercourse with women is likely to be fraught with a certain amount of danger from this very reason, young men are turned out into a world of women, with no real knowledge of them, no thoughts trained to reverence and respect by intercourse with them. A world is opened to them of which they know nothing except what their own undisciplined feelings teach them. Is it surprising that under such circumstances strong women are apt to turn from these young men, and leave them to extend and expand their knowledge under the tuition of women who are unworthy? It can be no sort of pleasure for a woman with a developed mind to converse with a man whose primary idea about her is that she is a woman. The women who might help young men, who might—even in a late hour—show them a glimpse of real purity, turn to men who have had a more fortunate education in this respect than the average young man, or to men who have lived through their impressionable age, and so the average young man drifts into the society of women who neither care to benefit him nor to improve themselves.

CHAPTER II.

In writing of purity I feel—just as I felt in writing of religion—that one is hampered by knowing that there exist people who apparently value neither purity nor religion in a man. But I think we may see that when people try to persuade themselves that it does not matter that a young man is "immoral" and irreligious the reason is that they do not see their way to prevent his being so. They find themselves in a world of young men, most of whom have loose ideas as to their relations with women, and most of whom have very little appreciation of true religion: they do not consider that they are responsible, and though they themselves may be neither immoral nor irreligious in the ordinary acceptation of the terms, they condone, or rather ignore in others what they see no way of altering.

But take any one of these men and women,

and give them a tender little child to deal with, will they dare to place him in any surroundings for the purpose of education which have not at their head some one who professes to regard religion and purity as essential to a man? In the heart of every woman that has borne a child, in the heart of every man that has begotten one, there is somewhere to be found a longing for the highest for their child; a longing which is often sadly smothered and distorted by worldliness and false philosophy, but which longing is nevertheless a definite appreciation of the divine and of the pure that is possible to all men. If this be so (and will any mother or father venture to deny it?) on what other hypothesis can we account for the tolerance of the irreligion and impurity of young men that exists in the world, than on the one that men and women force themselves into condoning or excusing what they see no way of altering, crying, "Peace, peace," where they *know* there is no peace? If men and women would not be content with this miserable state of affairs, if they would rouse themselves from their slothful and apathetic concurrence

in an arrangement of society against which their better nature must revolt, the present public-school system would of necessity be changed. If women would refuse to send their sons into any atmosphere where the influence of women was absent, "boards" and "councils" would very soon see that unmarried schoolmasters were an anomaly. The public-school system would begin to develop into a system where a boy would find a high standard of purity acknowledged and insisted upon with as much perseverance and as much openness as is a high standard of honour and of intellectuality. As I have said before, the system is one of demand and supply; as soon as an open and acknowledged standard of wholesome and reasonable thought on this matter was demanded, so soon would it be supplied. It would evolve itself from the needs of the community, as everything else connected with the system has evolved itself.

And we *do* want our men to be religious, really and truly religious; we *do* want our men to be pure, really and truly pure. We

do not believe that a man is less of a man when he loves Christ, and fears to disobey Him because he loves Him; we do not believe that a man is less strong when he conquers himself and his desires and leads a clean and pure life. We put a holy and a pure man on a higher pedestal in our mind than the place where dwells the irreligious and the unchaste one. Toleration of sin, of weakness and of irreligion means nothing else but cowardice, it means nothing else than that we will not force ourselves into action while we can build ourselves up any kind of a couch, even the most insecure, on which to lie still.

It is possible for men to lead pure lives. It may not be possible for this or that particular man to lead a pure life, but if any man is in this position it is either the fault of his education or the fault of his progenitors. And if it is possible for men to lead pure lives, and if we acknowledge that the world is in every way the worse for impurity, we are worse than cowards and sluggards not to force such changes upon the present system of our boys' education as shall make impurity a thing to

be so openly deplored that young men could not lead the lives they live now.

I said, when writing on the subject of Religion, that the popular notion that a man could not be "good" and manly was false had been proved false again and again. And I say the same in writing of Purity. It is true, most true, that a "manly" man is not usually a pure man, but that is not to say that in being pure a man is *ipso facto* not manly. It is only to say this, that the school which teaches boys to grow into manly men, to value the qualities and the attributes which go to form what we call the manly character, is not the school where boys also learn to value the qualities and attributes which go to form the pure character.

There are men who are both manly and pure, and these are the men who have learnt to value purity in some other school than the one where they learnt to value the sort of manliness which a boy gets at his public school.

There are also men who are pure and who are not what we call manly, and they are the

men who, as boys, have seen that an appreciation of the refinement which to them signified purity, and which was a necessity to them, was not to be found among the average "manly" schoolboy, and so they have avoided as much contact with other boys as their circumstances have permitted, and have thus lost opportunities of learning to be manly.

A boy who has been brought up at his mother's apron-strings is a pure boy, in so far as the apron-strings were attached to a woman who knew how to value and teach real purity, and he is also very often what is called a muff, because while a woman, by herself, can teach real purity, she cannot teach the species of manliness which a boy must learn if he is to make anything of his life with other men.

We are very fond of talking about the difficulty of insisting upon the same standard of sexual purity for men as for women, implying thereby that women on the whole lead chaster lives than men lead. We seem to forget that every time a man errs in this way a woman errs too. We seem to forget that because we set

aside the women who allow themselves thus to err, as a separate community, they still are women; women with the same characteristics which mark the difference from men as do those of our sisters and wives. If all women led chaste lives all men would lead chaste lives too. Therefore there is the same standard of purity for men as there is for women. The only difference in the matter is this: the men who lead unchaste lives do so because they have not learnt to control their natures, and thus are the victims of their passions. The women who lead unchaste lives do so because they possess the power of satisfying a certain demand which is made upon them. The presence of a demand creates the answer of the supply for its satisfaction. Only by teaching our boys in such wise that knowledge means purity can we hope to see women leading chaste lives.

The purity of the woman who concurs in a system which means the degradation of any other woman is no purity at all, it is a more ignoble quality than the impurity either of the man who gives way to his undisciplined nature

or of the woman who lends herself to its satisfaction.

We can mark off the women who provide the supply, and so we do, we cannot mark off the men who create the demand, and so we do not. But women are no purer than men, for to be pure means to esteem purity, not in one's self but as a virtue to be striven for by all, and women do not esteem purity while there exists a system which condones, which encourages, a state of things impure. Women could stop this state of things if they chose, and they alone can stop it; they do not choose, and on them rests most of the blame of the present standard of purity among men.

It is not hard to see how hopeless must often seem the task of those who labour at "rescue-work". We must give the individual a chance, but looked at as a remedy for a society evil rescue-work looks about as profitable a work as digging in dry sand. One poor woman saved means only the leaving of her place for another. The only way to help the mass of women who struggle in that slough of misery and sin is *through the public schools*; the

only possible way of touching prostitution is by teaching boys while they are young to know women by constant and open association with them.

CHAPTER III.

ONE word on marriage I must say before I turn to write of an evil which, in a way, stands by itself in a boy's life, and yet which is an evil of such importance that every aspect of school life is influenced by it.

I said at the beginning of Chapter I. that in dealing with the public-school system of to-day one was dealing with the motives to which the first school for boys owed its foundation. And from that day to this the primary reason, to which I have already alluded, for which the first school was instituted has run through the administration of all schools, and influences the system of our own day. In the days when institutions were first founded for the purpose of taking boys out of their normal surroundings and placing them apart while their education prepared them for life's work, morality was at such a low ebb that, as I said earlier, a man's only chance of leading a decent

life was to shut himself up. This system of education was evolved from a noble and brave determination on the part of certain of those who revolted at the state of things then existent, and who could see only one way of improving them. Society was corrupt, to give boys any chance they must be removed as far as possible from contact with society. In those days there can be no doubt that, rightly or wrongly, the celibate life was regarded as the highest life. Boys were taken out of society, shut up by themselves, in the hope that by being so treated they might be led to do without society altogether. Such a system cannot have had the effect of producing, on the whole, a race of men who led any purer or more self-controlled lives than do our men of to-day; but, at any rate, when a man was a celibate, when a man did deliberately renounce marriage, he did so from a good motive.

Society has changed, the people of England are by so many centuries' lapse so much stronger, so much holier, so much purer than they were then; but this one idea, this one motive, to which the system of public schools

still bends is very much the same, but with what a difference in the result! In early days a celibate was a man who deliberately set himself—as a revolt against the worse than loose morality of the day—to conquer himself, to control his desires, to lead a continent life. He saw intercourse between men and women so constantly abused that he determined to have none of it. And what of his counterpart, the bachelor of to-day? In the early days of which I speak a man forswore marriage because he saw no other way of leading a chaste life. What a miserable caricature of a celibate is the modern bachelor, the man who leads a single life for no other motive than one of selfish determination to get the best out of life and keep it to himself. The man who denies himself nothing, who controls none of his desires, who "cannot afford" to marry because he cannot afford to share. There are celibates now: there are men who, in renouncing the pleasures of the true married life, the joys of a union in which, taking into account all the trials and difficulties of human life, men and

women prepare to meet these difficulties and trials with greater strength, with reinforced determination because union means strength, there are men who respecting and reverencing marriage, appreciating all the help which it can give, deliberately renounce it because there is some element in their life, or in their life's work, which demands the sacrifice. These are the only true celibates; there is no merit in giving up anything of which you do not know the worth, and the man who does not marry because he does not want to may take as much credit to himself as the man who does not care to listen to music when he has no ear.

Some years ago there were about a dozen men assembled in the room of a university undergraduate; they were all typical athletic "'varsity men". The reason for which they had met was to hold a prayer meeting. Before they began, the leader suggested that they should all confess in public what temptation each felt was in him the greatest hindrance in his approach to God's Throne. The answer of all, except (I believe) two, was "Impurity".

Now it is my firm opinion that nine young men out of ten if asked the same question under the same circumstances—circumstances, I mean, in which they were making an attempt to get nearer to the religious life—would answer thus. And I believe that in half those cases the answer would be a false one. I do not mean that the young man would be intentionally misrepresenting himself, but that in the false idea that generally obtains on this subject altogether would lie the individual misrepresentation.

If young men were brought up on the understanding that a certain act, which they and others are pleased to call "impure," is an ordinance of God, by which children are created and brought into the world, and that it is only in the abuse of our faculties for this ordinance that impurity lies, I think they might be brought to look upon the matter quite differently.

Sexual intercourse is right in itself; perfectly right. It is wrong only when it is practised at the wrong time or under unsuitable circumstances; but then so is every single thing we

do. Sexual intercourse is wrong when in its practice we are being influenced by any fault of our nature, selfishness, moral cowardice, and so forth. One uses the word lust as though by it we meant sin; it has got to be commonly so used because of the false way of looking at this matter of which I have spoken. Lust, in the original meaning of the word, desire, is not wrong; the lust or desire of man for woman, of woman for man, is implanted by God for His own good purposes. And it is faithless as well as foolish to say that lust (looked at in its real meaning) is sin. But of course it may be made an occasion of sin, as may many another natural desire, and the reason why lust may be made the occasion of worse sin than most other desires is because its consequences are so far-reaching. When we sin it is the consequence of that sin to the very farthest ripple which spreads around the committal of the sin that we have to look at, and it is out of the looking at the terrible and endlessly far-reaching consequences of unbridled lust that the danger has arisen of the false way of regarding the

initial reason from which these eventual consequences originally arise.

It is in the unbridledness that the sin lies, not in the desire itself.

To keep lust within bounds, to give mankind the opportunity of exerting self-control in this most important matter, to prevent the calamitous effects of uncontrolled desire, marriage was instituted. Therefore it is in marriage that sexual desire finds the right and only reasonable time for expression. Could it not be made possible to teach boys and eventually young men that it is the selfishness, the want of self-control, the short-sightedness in not taking consequences into account, that are to be blamed in them, not "impurity". If young men would say, "Please God, I will not be selfish; I will learn to hold all my desires under control; I will learn to look forward and see the result of my actions," they need not fear that they will have to grovel in unnecessary self-abasement and call themselves impure.

Convention and custom, the convention and custom which have grown up from the false

way of treating the question of difference of sex, shrouding it in foolish secrecy, making important what is of little importance and belittling what is great, have produced a state of things which makes young men think that the temptation to "impurity" is a most tremendous and overwhelming temptation. So terrible does this temptation for men appear to women, that mothers shrink from even looking into the futures of their sons for fear they should encounter this unknown and nameless evil.

Convention and custom have taken the weapon of secrecy, and with so much success have they wielded it that this unfortunate state of affairs has resulted; with the consequence, that boys and young men grow up with the idea that the temptation to what people call impurity is so strong, so insidious a temptation that but few can stand against it. They go farther than this, for most men persuade themselves that when a man leads a continent life he does so because temptation to impurity does not exist for him.

What a false, exaggerated and faithless way

this is of regarding the whole matter. The temptations to impurity (what I may call "natural" impurity, as against the unnatural vices of which I intend to speak later) which a young man has to undergo, are temptations in which half the strength lies in the fact of the secrecy with which they are regarded by those around him, and by which he has taught himself to regard them. For what, after all, is this temptation? It is an inclination to indulge in a natural desire of the body, a desire which God Himself has implanted in the nature of mankind. Why are we to regard this as so terrible? Above all, why are we—in avoiding regarding it at all—to thus avoid teaching our sons to learn the virtues of unselfishness and self-control with which they would be able to cope with this temptation and resist it, where indulgence in this natural desire would mean acting selfishly and to the hurt of one's fellow-creatures?

In writing thus of marriage I have treated it in a rather—what I may call—"utilitarian" manner because I wanted to show a common-sense aspect of a question into which morbid-

ness and hysteria have entered with such disastrous effects. I treat it in such a manner because it seems almost necessary to do so when one is dealing with a low standard of morality, as St. Paul found when he was writing to the Corinthians.

And our standard, our average young man's standard, on this question of sexual intercourse is so miserably low that it would seem utterly out of place to him to read what is quite true, far truer than anything I have hitherto said, that we abuse sexual intercourse when we use it otherwise than because fleshly union should be symbolic of spiritual union. God has given us this means of communicating with each other, and we have so shamefully abused His gift that the pure-minded shrink from lending themselves to a system which means so much falseness and so much coarse misrepresentation, to such an extent that many good men and women will not marry at all.

And here we come upon the true celibate again; but God forbid that I should say that any of us ought to believe that the world is no better now than it was in the early days

when men, in advocating and practising celibacy, were setting up what was then considered an almost impossible standard of purity and continence. Women have struggled out of the morass with wonderfully distorted ideas of the main principle when they come to apply it to men, or to the unfortunate creatures of their own sex, who, in their own struggles to be free of the mud, they have kicked into it the deeper. But nevertheless women are infinitely better than they were, and they get better every day. And, moreover, at this present day men see things differently to what they did, and every day there are added numbers to the ranks of strong, self-controlled, pure-hearted men. Only do not let us shut our eyes to this great danger, the danger lest in purifying ourselves we may leave behind untouched the mud from which we emerge for others to wallow in.

Impurity "lies in the eye of the beholder". Two men may look upon the same picture: to one it may seem all that there is of beauty and purity, to the other it may mean all that there is of coarseness and evil suggestion. The pic-

ture is the same, but in the heart of one man one would find his ideas of natural subjects in an open field of clean, pure, fresh air, in a clear light of sensible knowledge ; in the heart of the other man one would find his ideas of natural subjects in a close stuffy room, in an atmosphere of such thickness that he himself could barely peer in, and through which he could only see what he did see in a distorted and absolutely false fashion.

Men ought to want to marry ; true marriage is a beautiful and a sacred thing, the best state that is provided for us ; but men ought to want to marry for this reason only, that it is better to lead a "common" life than a single one. The natural desire of man to woman and of woman to man should be used as a means, never as an end ; used as a means for bettering our condition and for the furthering of the improvement of the world. How are we to reach this standard, how are we to hope to teach it while love, marriage, generation and birth are to our boys subjects either for shamefaced silence or for foolish ribaldry ? Can we not look the question fairly and

squarely in the face and, in so looking, tear down the veil of ignorance and foolish prudery in which custom and ourselves, as custom's devotees, have shrouded truth, the clear knowledge of which alone can help to make men and women pure alike?

Am I discounting romance, am I undervaluing sentiment? Ah, no. A man does not love less tenderly because he loves wisely, a woman does not value all the little acts that spring from her lover's chivalry and courtesy less when she knows that his chivalry and his courtesy are the expressions of a love which is true love because it is founded on a true knowledge of herself. Romance and sentiment are lovely things, too lovely to be rudely touched, far too delicate to be analytically treated except with the greatest care. But this one may say, that romance and sentiment by themselves are useless, fast fading things; only as they are the outward and visible signs of something inward and spiritual, only as they speak because they are the expression of something too deep for words, are they to be valued.

A man who loves and does not show his love

to the one person to whom the knowledge would be a help is nearly as much in fault as the man who shows a love he does not feel. Not quite, for in the former lies the germ of all that is good if he will but let it have its way. The words, the looks, the gestures which denote the feeling of the heart which gives them rise are invaluable in themselves, as signs of what has its root far deeper down. That these expressions belong more to the birth of love, to the developments of its earlier stages, that they are apt to cease as "time goes on," ought only to be because, through them and by their help, a true knowledge has been gained of the heart whose love gave them birth, and which by more constant contact and by closer communion with the object of its love has learnt to express itself in better and more abiding fashion.

CHAPTER IV.

THERE are certain evils in this world that we do not "talk about". Bound up in our very existence, bred into the very marrow of our bones, is the feeling that to certain subjects secrecy is the appropriate accompaniment, or at any rate as much secrecy as is possible. And I cannot help thinking that when custom has built rules there is sure to be some measure of sense in keeping them. But one has no right to take these rules—as we are so apt to do—wholesale, and follow them blindly, for custom is founded upon very mixed motives, and there can be no doubt that as to these rules of silence on certain subjects there is much that is wholly wrong, false and mischievous.

In this world our rules of custom depend so much upon the fact which shadows all our actions, all our best efforts, the fact that the worthy must suffer for the faults of the unworthy. I mean, in this connection, that as long as there

are men and women with minds which take pleasure in an unwholesome way of looking at anything which admits of an unwholesome aspect being taken, so long must the men and women to whom such an aspect is quite foreign concur in keeping silence altogether on these subjects, rather than run the risk of opening a nauseous stream into ordinary conversation.

But knowing certain facts and talking over certain aspects of those facts are two very different matters. If is senseless ever to talk where talking would serve a bad purpose, it is equally senseless not to make known a fact when making it known would serve a good purpose, even if by so doing one breaks through the canons of custom. For, as I said, custom is built upon mixed motives, and pre-eminent among the bad motives is the one which buries in silence certain "awkward" subjects, because as long as they are so buried society at large need take no count of them.

There are two facts about public-school life which are not generally spoken about, and, comparatively speaking, very little known

about; they are evils which are the outcome, and could be the outcome only, of the system of public-school life: bad talk among boys and immoral intercourse between boys. Many people think that these two evils belong in the same category: they do not. You may have a school where the usual standard of talk among the boys, when they are speaking of matters relating to natural functions, is so low that the whole life of the school is corrupted by it, while in that school there may be little of the immoral intercourse of which I will speak later. A liking for foul and filthy talk belongs to quite a different character to which the other sin is a temptation, and I will speak of this evil first.

The fact of the existence of these two evils is just one of those which I have mentioned above, a fact the knowing of which can do nothing but good, for to the only people to whom the knowledge might possibly bring harm—the schoolboys themselves—the fact is already known, and it is to the very reason that they, knowing it themselves, feel that others do not know it that half the mischief is due.

At a certain age every boy becomes aware that there is something in his life of which he has been hitherto unaware; his manhood begins to stir within him. This is as God has ordained it; this is perfectly right. Most boys are brought up upon the theory that when a boy has any thoughts on natural matters he must keep them to himself, consequently when a boy begins to feel that the world in relation to his own body is not quite what it used to be, that there is a life, an energy, beginning to influence him which he cannot understand and yet one in which he feels himself instinctively to be most intimately bound up, there are several ways in which this may affect him, and one of them is that he begins first to think and next to speak of natural things in an unwholesome manner. I think it is not hard to see the reason of this: boys are forced into an absolutely unnatural way of looking at natural facts by the plan of never allowing them to speak of these things, the knowledge of which, by this plan, they are bound to acquire in the most unwise fashion possible. The laws of human nature are like no other

laws, for they are ourselves. Most boys are brought up, until they go to school, in entire ignorance of everything relating to their own bodies except what they can find out for themselves; as soon as they get to school they learn much more, but they do not learn anything but the bare facts, the results of such and such a course of action. If boys go to school (as in most cases they do go) without any education as to the whys and wherefores of these facts, they are absolutely bound to present themselves in an unwholesome way, because they are not facts which can be looked at from the outside, taken or left alone, so to speak; they are, as I said, ourselves, bound up with our natures.

At a certain age boys begin to feel instinctively that they are children no longer, they leave off looking backward and living in the present and begin to think of the future, and —above all—they begin to think of themselves. This means that there is becoming active within them the energy of manhood, and it is upon the way in which a boy takes himself at this time that his character *quâ* man depends. If

this energy is met by knowledge of everything to which it relates, if it be met also by self-restraint, if it be found in a clean, wholesome, well-informed mind, then all may be very well. One would find in such a case that the boy in question would turn with renewed energy to work and to games, that he would instinctively avoid lines of thought which might lead to unwholesome or morbid thought, that he would pursue a course of action which would tend to make his body his servant. If, on the other hand, the only knowledge which a boy possesses is that which at home he has ferreted out for himself and brooded over in silence, or which at school he has heard spoken of coarsely and ignorantly, statements of facts accompanied by words and gestures which give nothing but false and distorted images of the truths of nature, then this energy, this life of which I have spoken, so to speak, goes rotten, ferments. Being energy of a most vital kind it must have an outlet, and it takes one which results in untold harm. It is as a rule the strong, virile boy who indulges in this inclination for filthy talk, and by filthy talk I mean

this: a taking of natural subjects and discoursing of them in an unnatural manner. Largely the reason why boys begin to talk in this manner is that, coupled with this new-born energy of which I have spoken, the energy of incipient manhood, there is ignorance of the true functions of our bodies.

A boy walks into this slough, just as a man might walk into and sink under a bog of foul mud; foul talk gets a hold, a growing hold, upon the boy's very nature, the force of which no one can appreciate till he has spoken to a boy who—having been sent ignorant to school—has sunk into this foul mud, and who is longing to escape from it. It is as though one walked out one morning and found the whole air thick and tainted with vapour rising from certain heaps of refuse lying about; there is no escaping it, and for the purest, most wholesomely educated boy it is impossible to escape its horrible miasma.

Boys who go to a good preparatory school are prepared before they leave it for the chance of hearing much and seeing much to which they must learn to shut ears and eyes, but

they cannot be prepared for what actually goes on in some schools.

A boy, whose parents care anything at all about his future welfare, ought to be sent to school on the understanding that if he finds there a standard against which his better self revolts, he should say so and give his parents the choice of removing him. I have known case after case in which boys have begged and prayed to be taken away from school for this reason, not daring to speak out and not able therefore to give any reason which will satisfy their parents. If a boy has been well brought up, if he has been to a good preparatory school, and if he then begs to be taken away from his public school, parents may be pretty nearly certain that there is some element in that school which is hurting the boy morally.

There is one tremendous difficulty that gets in our way in regard to this matter, and I think it is a difficulty which hampers the moral life of all big and popular public schools. When a boy is once sent to a school it is a matter almost of impossibility to remove him from it, simply because it is very difficult to

send him to another. To the very best of us, if we were made head-masters of a public school, it must make a difference to have the knowledge that a boy once in can scarcely get out. A public school is like a profession: if you do not like it you must do without liking it, the time for choosing is past. For this reason extraordinary care should be taken by the public to get to know the internal working and the definite moral tone of the different public schools. The present state of affairs should be an incredible impossibility. We send our boys at their very most impressionable age, at the most sensitive time and turning-point of their lives, into an atmosphere of which we know nothing. If the circumstances of public-school life were such that one might presuppose a healthy and invigorating atmosphere because of those circumstances, it might be a different matter. But when one considers that, on the contrary, it is bound to be an atmosphere containing some harm, and may be an atmosphere containing *all* harm, it is extremely difficult to imagine how a state of things can have grown up which allows of

mothers and fathers deliberately putting their children into a life which may mean ruin to them, and must mean a certain deterioration.

When a boy of fourteen has entered one or other of the big public schools he has practically no choice but to remain in it, whatever sort of place it may prove to be or however unsuited it is to him individually, that is to say if he is to continue a public-school career.

The reasons why this is so are obvious and, I should think, necessary to the system of public-school existence. *Noblesse oblige* for one thing, the head-masters' *noblesse.* A man does not want to hold himself in readiness to take advantage of the disadvantage of another in the same profession as himself. To take a boy away from his school implies distrust (under the present system, grave distrust) of the management of the school, and one head-master does not care to profit by this implied distrust of another. But this reason is a small one compared with the fact that in all the big public schools a boy cannot be received unless his name has been "put down" for it for some years previously. Of course one may

put a boy's name down for several schools, and this should always be done, but when the choice at the last has been made and the boy entered, it is extremely difficult to change his school.

I do not see how this is to be altered, and while things remain as they are it is not difficult to see that it is a great temptation to parents to take refuge in the feeling that "what can't be cured must be endured". And it is also not difficult to see that it is a great temptation to those in authority in public schools to take things as they find them, and to rest content with exerting something less than that supreme effort, that ceaseless untiring vigilance, which is ever necessary to keep a school's tone anywhere near what it should be. The race of men who govern our public schools would —under the present system—need to be a race of unselfish, energetic, clear-sighted men, blessed with iron constitutions and unflagging energy and untiring charity. And verily I believe that, as a race, they stand wonderfully high in these respects, but they are mortal, and as long as we are mortal we can rarely

work alone, we can rarely carry on our conflict with sin unless there is a response from the other side. Here and there has lived a "giant on the earth" whose force and individuality have been such that he can achieve what would be impossibilities to other men. Here and there have been men whose influence could permeate a whole school and drag it, masters, parents, prefects and boys, along with him up the steep way of righteousness; but this is rare, and we do not want to have to take our chance of such a man being at the head of the school to which we are going to send our boys. We want a state of affairs in which it is possible for every school in the land to be a suitable place to which to send our boys, a place where we know that the temptations and troubles which they meet will be only those that are inevitable and right in our companionship one with another. Above all we want a state of affairs in which it is impossible that in a boy's life may be lurking a hidden secret evil ready to corrupt or to shock.

And this state of affairs will not be until

the internal working of public schools is far more a matter of public interest than it is. We must know intimately and in detail exactly into what sort of atmosphere our sons go when they leave us, and we can only do this by establishing perfect confidence between ourselves and them. How often, how very often, has a mother said to me when bewailing the dangers of evil talk and evil intercourse for her boy at school: "And yet, you know, one cannot speak of these things to a boy". This idea must be combated, must be got rid of. This idea of secrecy on matters relating to the functions of our bodies has not one single advantage when it comes to a question of frankness between a mother and her children, and it has this overwhelming disadvantage, that through this secrecy, through this fear of speaking out, a boy may get into a position which would mean his ruin, physical and mental.

If schoolmasters could once appreciate that this evil could not exist in their schools without the public knowing of it, they would have at once an incentive to energetic care which could

not fail of its object. It is possible to have a school which is pure; it is possible but it is difficult, and the reason why it is difficult is that boys have within them through the weaknesses of their lower nature, and through the faults of their bringing up, this unending tendency to a mischievous way of regarding natural things; and this being so, this fact being established, the average schoolmaster deals with it in a more or less half-hearted fashion because he does not see his way to getting rid of it, nor indeed does he see any intense desire on the part of public opinion to have it got rid of.

The effect of public opinion is the only influence outside a man's own conscience which can "keep" schoolmasters "in order". Public opinion in this matter is partly ignorant, partly careless, and partly (a very small part) desperate. But there is no need for desperation for the hearts of those who are neither ignorant nor careless. As I have said, a school can be pure, and therefore it is in our power to insist that schools shall be pure; and the only way of doing this is to bring about a state of things

in which the majority of people so educate their boys that when they go to a school they will not stay in it if it is corrupt, a state of things in which boys know that those who love them know every danger to which they can be exposed, and in which this species of evil is treated as an unnatural disease due to unnatural circumstances and not to be tolerated for a day.

CHAPTER V.

WHAT I have said of foul talk applies to immoral intercourse between boy and boy to this extent only, that in the secrecy with which it is treated lies half its harm. Apart from this there is much to be said which takes us into quite another train of thought. As I said earlier, in all boys after they have reached a certain age, be it thirteen, fourteen or fifteen, begin the stirrings of manhood. This is inevitable, this must be faced and dealt with. A boy who, from his earliest childhood, has learnt to control himself, learnt to hold his wishes and desires in check, deals with these presages of manhood's trials himself. Instinctively he checks his thoughts when they take a course which, as instinctively, he knows will lead to mischief. Instinctively he works the harder at his games and at his lessons, lest his flesh should get dominion over his mind and thoughts if they are idle, and he fights his battle and wins

it. But the boy who is slack, the boy whose home has not taught him the supreme lesson of self-control and of self-denial, gives way at once; these stirrings of manhood mean nothing to him but a world into which he inquisitively and shamefacedly peers, they produce in him a condition of mind and body which makes him —according to his temperament—morbid, sentimental or coarse. In the former case he is assailed by a temptation of which I have spoken elsewhere, a temptation to indulge in "self-abuse"; in the second case the danger is the one of which I am now speaking; in the third, the boy indulges in the coarse and filthy talk of which I have already spoken, in the allusions to and descriptions of natural things which he had possibly hardly observed before.

Now in the case of the "sentimental" boy there is more to be said than in that of the morbid or of the coarse boy. Morbidness and coarseness are in themselves altogether harmful, though the qualities may take rise in characters which, if they had been properly trained, might be strong and fine. But sentimentalism

cannot be expunged from a person's character altogether. A reflective, introspective, sensitive boy need never, if sensibly brought up, become morbid or hysterical, though this may be the danger of his temperament. A strong-natured, powerful, virile boy need never become coarse if he has been blessed with parents who have seen his danger and taught him to see it too. But a romantic, emotional, soft-hearted boy must always be sentimental, and must grow to be a sentimental man; and he need not be a bad sort of man either—it is a pity we have not a few more sentimental men in the world. For the right kind of sentimental man or boy means the *feeling* man or boy, the man or boy who puts forth to others, who is not afraid of speaking where he loves, who is not afraid of giving others the comfort of his expressed affection and regard.

But the wrong kind of sentimental man, who does not know him? The man who goes about the world "wanting to be loved," who never thinks what he ought to be giving, he is so taken up in the process of receiving. The man who "loves" so easily and in such a

catholic manner that the bestowal of his affections is an insult rather than a matter for congratulation to the recipient of them. A man whose own emotions are his first interest, and who indulges in them at the expense of his neighbours without any regret.

This is the kind of man who has been the dangerous boy, the boy who makes love to boys younger than himself, because he is shut up in a public school with his uncontrolled emotions, his incipient sentimental manhood, and he must expend these on some one. Nearly always these sentimental friendships begin quite innocently, with no thought on the part of the elder boy but a soft leaning to what is younger, weaker, and more attractive than himself; it is in the intercourse becoming more constant, more intimate, that the danger lies. The two boys—the big and the little one—have, as a rule, nothing intellectual in common, and the big boy has this mischievous sentimentalism, backed by the incipient impulses of manhood to urge him to danger. The little boy is first flattered by the attention of the elder boy, other boys around them soon

begin to chaff, the little boy is dubbed "Miss So-and-so," "Old So-and-so's sweetheart," and the child is too weak or shy to speak up and protest even if he wishes to do so, and mischief is done, the effect of which may prove utterly disastrous to both boys.

There are two ways of regarding this evil: from the point of view of the boys themselves who sin, and from the point of view of the community in which they live. To the boys themselves who carry their intercourse with each other to the point of falling completely under the influence of what is sensuously evil in their fleshly natures the degradation may spell ruin. And the school, the society in which they live, suffers incalculably. In all big schools this vice exists to a certain extent, it is always being fought, more or less, according to the strength of goodness, purity and insight of the men who work with the boys; it is always cropping up in unexpected places contaminating little groups of the society. And it is a most poisonous weed; it exhales foul vapours which affect all its surroundings; it lowers the moral and physical tone, and no

school or society in which it exists can escape its influence.

For the worst mischief is that in every school boys feel that here is an evil of which their parents and many others whom they respect know nothing; that they are living in a society which holds a danger of which they could never speak to the very people of whom they ought to have learnt all that is valuable in the appreciation of purity.

To many boys there is but one safeguard from impure thought and act, and that is reverence and love for their mothers. This reverence and love must be an incomplete thing unless a boy can feel that his mother knows what his dangers are. Boys feel that they have among them a hideous thing of which no one knows the existence except themselves, and this feeling fosters the evil more than anything else. In the fact of its being submerged lies half its danger. The best and purest and strongest boy who lives in a school where this evil exists cannot fail of being strongly tainted by the miasma arising

from it. It has a more crushing effect upon the moral life of a school than any other evil, because its existence is secret except among the boys themselves. Drag the evil thing out, spread it to the brightest light of inspection, let *every one* know the thing exists, and half the cure of the mischief is wrought.

That is to say the cure is wrought of the evil effect which this secret sin has upon the members of a school or society who do not indulge in it. But making the existence of an evil open, where it was secret, does not eliminate from the minds of people the desire to sin, though it may prevent many from giving way to insidious temptation either from knowledge of to what evil it may lead, or from fear of giving pain to those they love, or from fear of public opinion. But the evil itself remains, the danger is still there, and even if the fact that friendships between big and little boys are dangerous, and of what that danger is, was made perfectly open, still there are left sentimental boys big and little, and still in the very being of an English public school the danger lives.

The constitution of our public schools is of a monastic order. Boys and men are shut up in them for two-thirds of the year with no opportunities of intercourse with any one but themselves, and this kind of intercourse takes no account of nature. The life of a public school, in this respect, is entirely artificial. The natural course for boys and young men is to devote a certain part of their time to talking and being with girls and young women; their whole nature demands it, and, as a rule, demands it in a perfectly reasonable and wholesome manner.

Boys after the age of ten or so are treated as though, for them, the other sex did not exist. And at school a boy's life is such that, unless he has been brought up to fight the weaknesses of his character with great vigour, he must succumb in some degree to the temptations to either morbidness, sensuality, or coarseness of talk and action which are apt to assail him at every age, and are certain to assail him at a certain age.

These temptations will be there for the lad under the most favourable circumstances; he

will have his battle to fight wherever and in whatever circumstances he finds himself. What power then must these temptations have, what a fight it must necessarily be, in the life of the average public-school boy? He has no one to turn to for advice, no one to think of as sympathising and longing to help him in his trouble, no one to assure him that these fears and horrors which beset him are but the stirrings of his God-given manhood, the mystery of which he must learn to face bravely and understand purely.

I want my readers fully to appreciate this fact that this evil has its origin in a perfectly wholesome development of nature. The case does not look nearly so hopeless, does not in fact look hopeless at all, when one realises that to nearly all boys this danger comes through ignorance. Boys and men are, so to say, forced into compliance with the demands of their lower nature because they do not see any reason for refusal. If a man is thirsty and a glass of water is put into his hand, he drinks it; if, with the same thirst, he knows that the spring from which the

water is drawn is poisoned, the wish to drink disappears; the thirst does not disappear, but he would wait till he could quench it wholesomely.

It is as natural for some boys at a certain age to begin to look out for some other on which to lavish themselves as it is for a flower to turn to the sun. If they have been led from their childhood to value self-control, to see the beauty of self-denial for the good of others, their first impulse will be to use this instinct and not to abuse it. It will be for them an age at which they will become more thoughtful for others, at which they will learn to be chivalrous in their thoughts of, and attitude to, women and girls, and to be sensitive about hurting the feelings of others.

If parents would only learn themselves, and teach their children, that in the world of God's nature there is nothing that the youngest and weakest of His children may not know with advantage; if they would leave off assisting the evil one in his work of impurity by wrapping up natural matters in a veil of secrecy;

if they would bring up their boys and their girls on an equal footing of knowledge of God's laws, of equality in purity and temperance, so much, so very much of the evil might be trained out of the lives of our boys and men.

As long as there is an evil in any system for which the system itself does not provide a remedy that system is wrong. The system of public schools is grievously wrong in this matter, for here this evil exists side by side with an inability in the system itself to remedy it. There is only one remedy for this sin, and that remedy is that boys should mix with women and girls.

I know people who will say that this would only be substituting one sin for another. In the first place this statement would not be true, and in the second, even if it were true, the sin where it took place would be a natural one, which the other is not.

But it is not true, for no one in their senses would dream of throwing boys and girls together in the same way that boys and boys are thrown together at school; and yet the evil that might result from such a course would

not be as destructive to humanity as the evil that does result from the other.

When one has made all possible acknowledgment of the good resulting from the existence of public schools where boys board and live, one may still see that there are vast improvements to be made in the system by which these public schools are regulated. When one realises that boys learn to be men at their public schools, and then look round at our world of men and their actions, I think we may safely say that there is something grievously wrong in the system of the places where boys learn their standards of right and wrong on certain matters. But of this particular evil of which I have written there is a remedy, and that is to get as many women into social contact with the boys as the system can possibly allow. No housemaster should be unmarried. We know that men will marry fools, but my experience is that silly women do not, as a rule, care about marrying schoolmasters.

And what can any one put against the good which may result from such an arrangement?

What influence can possibly be more beneficial than that of a good, honest, wholesome young woman upon boys of the ages of those to be found in public schools? It ought to be a regularly understood part of the public-school system that except in the hours of work the ladies belonging to the establishment should see as much of the boys as possible, and that the more they see of them the better.

My remedy stinks in the nostrils of many of my readers; and what of the sin for which I propose this remedy, is its savour so sweet that we can delay in hastening to purge our every motive from prejudice, either of custom or of personal feeling, in hunting for a remedy?

Can we not see that any system which does not provide for the demands of nature is likely to have in its working tendencies to very grave moral evil? As I have said, the system of our public schools is an unnatural system, and it is this that accounts for this terrible evil. Much can be done at home. I have said, in writing elsewhere of the relation of the school and the home life of little boys, that it is the duty of parents to see that their boys associate as

much as possible with girls and women in their holidays; but most of a boy's life is spent at his school, and there, if he have not the opportunity of learning to know and appreciate women and womanhood, he must be thrown in upon himself and much evil may result.

If it were a rule in all schools that every man with whom the boys had dealings must have either a wife or a sister living with him it would be an immense step gained. These ladies would bring other ladies and, occasionally, girls about them, with whom the boys would learn to associate and make friends.

I have had a long and intimate experience of boys of all ages, and I do not hesitate to say that no boy or young man goes cleanly through his school and college career unless the influence of some woman or girl in the concrete, or womankind in the abstract, is strong upon him.

The combination of a good man and a good woman is the most perfect combination, makes the most beautiful entirety, on God's earth. Why are boys forced into circumstances, un-

natural and unwholesome, which put far from them the power of appreciating the fact that their great object should be so to live that in them may be found the healthy purity with which alone such a combination can be made?

EPILOGUE.

WHEN *Boyhood*, a book to which I have referred once or twice, came before the public there were two criticisms which its reviewers were apt to put forward. One, that I wrote as though boarding-schools were an unalterable necessity, and the other, that in writing on questions of purity I spoke too clearly.

Both of these criticisms are, I think my reviewers may consider, as applicable to this book as they found them applicable to *Boyhood*.

As to the first. I put rather diffidently forward my own opinion, which is that boarding-schools are not the best kind of schools that could possibly exist. I should not speak diffidently at all; on the contrary, I should use every argument I possess to try and prove that day-schools as they might be are infinitely to be preferred to the boarding-

schools as they are did I not feel that there is a capacity for vast improvement in the boarding-school of the present day. Looking at the matter all round, and speaking from my experience of boys and school life, I should say that if one could get as good "blood" into the day-schools as is now attracted by the boarding-schools, and if one could get the element of gentle womanhood and home and social life into the boarding-schools which is present with boys who go to day-schools, there would not be "a pin to pick between them".

In writing as I have done, both in the present book and in *Boyhood*, of boarding-schools, I have written from the point of view that if one is speaking with the idea of giving help where help is needed, one must deal with things as they are, even while one is striving to get them as one believes they ought to be; and though one may deprecate a state of things which has allowed of the present development and condition of boarding-schools, one need not therefore disapprove of their existence.

It is not my purpose here to dilate upon

the advantages or the disadvantages of boarding-schools as against day-schools, only I would say just this: If parents and others in judging of their respective merits and demerits could, once for all, completely set aside all idea of their own convenience and comfort until they had fully considered in all its bearings the welfare of their boys, they would find more to be said for the day-school than has ever been said yet. Also, that if parents could be brought to take some trouble to understand what education means, and if they would approach the question less from the point of view of whether this or that particular school was best suited to the individual needs of their own boy or boys, as of what system was best calculated to turn out boys who would help to further the good of the state, the different systems of education would have a better chance of being fairly judged.

I said at the beginning of the chapter that I hoped to deal with both the criticisms, which I thought as applicable to this book as to the book on which they were originally given; and the second of these criticisms was that in

speaking of questions of purity for the minds and bodies of boys I was "too outspoken". I should like to say one word first of gratitude to those who read *Boyhood*, and reading it understood the motives with which the particular chapter, the one on Cleanliness, was written. They were so numerous, so much in excess of those who saw cause for blame (let me say at once that the blame was always kind), that I took heart of grace, and felt that, on the whole, I had not done wrong in writing as I did; wrong, that is, in risking putting stumbling-blocks in the way of those whose weakness might lie in the direction of that form of cowardice which I have tried to preach against. And to these my kind critics, who, I feel sure, will criticise this book as they criticised that, I want to say this: I do not love writing and talking of these things, and I do not think that any one could love it less. But *I* have to speak because *you*, and those who think as you do, have so long wrapped up the truth (the clean, honest truth, not the truths that I have felt it right to make as public as the circulation of my books will

allow) that it has gone rotten for want of fresh air. I have been told that *Boyhood* is not a suitable book to give to young married women. I have been told by good women that—though it is otherwise helpful for those who are bringing up children—certain things are said in the chapter on Cleanliness which are put in such a manner that it would not be right or wise to put the book into the hands of unmarried women. I have been asked, in sending out another edition, to "wrap up" these necessary truths, so that their nakedness should not strike so baldly. Much advice and remonstrance of this sort I have had, and to all I have made the one answer, as I make it here. Do you think it right that people who are in, or may be put in, the position of bringing up children should know clearly every danger to which children can be exposed? If you do, how else can you teach this lesson than in plain terms? We want children to know things, but we do not want to put ourselves to the pain of telling them. We will not bring ourselves to the point of breaking down the barrier of false shame which stands be-

tween ourselves and them. This barrier is *not* modesty ; modesty is the reticence which holds back speech or action where they would do harm by expression. Modesty is the opposite of immodesty, and can one imagine immodesty between an earnest guardian of childhood and the child he is guarding ?

Those who, after reading what I have to say of the mischief of secrecy on natural matters in a child's mind, still think that "it is better they should not know," let me, as a last word, implore to ruthlessly dig out and examine the *reasons* of this decision in their minds. There are of them those who I know will bear with me when I say, this reticence, this modesty which you cling to, which you respect and almost reverence, what is it ? Give your child knowledge and you do not take away his reticence or his modesty where these are valuable. On the very extreme contrary ; he will be more modest, more reticent, but in so being he will be silent—where silence is right—*knowing what he is being silent about,* instead of shamefacedly concealing half-truths which are more than lies.

I know that I have spoken with absolute frankness on these matters, a frankness which has in some cases shocked and offended. And in doing so I would like to say that, in spite of all I have said, I have never lost sight of the fact that this very evil of impurity which is so deplorable, and which, in my dealings with boys, my whole being is set against, that, in its origin, this evil is due to a large extent —indeed to the whole extent of the degree in which one usually meets with it in boys—to instincts, maternal and paternal, which are in themselves perfectly right.

There is no stronger instinct to be found than the mother's instinct for shielding her child. A mother would fain interpose her body between her child, the fruit of that body, and everything which could touch him to his hurt. I believe that this is, in the main, the reason why mothers, as a rule, do not want their children to "know things". As to the paternal instinct which tends in the same direction, we must remember that every boy is going to be a man, and that every man has once been a boy; and that there are in

every man's life certain tracts of ground which he would rather not re-traverse; having rolled down the mud pretty firmly once he would rather leave it alone.

Now it is easy to denounce the feeling which, calling itself love, puts a barrier between a child and evil, which effectually shuts out any chance of the child ever seeing the face of its enemy, and thus learning to combat it. It is easy to say that the instinct which calls itself prudence is in reality nothing but the cowardice which prevents our giving ourselves the pain of probing old sores so that another—even our own child—may profit by our experience. But I would rather try to keep in mind the fact that it is not in the instincts themselves that we must look for the origin of the evil. They are all right; but one has to be very quick indeed—as indeed one needs to be with nature in all its expressions—to catch them at the right moment and to train them by our reason. Instinct can be regarded merely as a starting-point, ground to "take off" from. We are ready enough to acknowledge this when it is a question of instinct

with regard to certain departments of life, too ready, indeed, to quash these instincts altogether, with the result of much eventual loss of individuality.

The protective instinct of the mother is nothing on which she need pride herself, but it is a gift for which she may be profoundly grateful, for without it no woman makes a really good mother. Instinct says: "Keep your child from all harm". We question, "But how?" Here, if we allow instinct to answer again, it says: "By putting yourself between it and all that can hurt it". But it is *there* that reason should have answered and not instinct, and reason would say: "By teaching your child where harm lies, what harm is, and what harm leads to, and by these means showing him where and how to avoid it". Now I cannot believe that the mother's instinct *alone* would bring her (to come more directly to my point) to shut her child right away from all knowledge of the mysteries of the functions of our bodies as they have direct or indirect relation to such acts as we have come to consider it best not

to make public. For a mother's instinct does not lead her to take altogether that line as regards other harm to which her children may be exposed. More or less, no doubt, she seeks to hedge her child all round, but it is not so much, in other cases than the one I have spoken of, with a view to keeping her child from knowledge of evil as of contact with evil.

And here the father's instinct comes in with great force. It is not so easy to see the righteousness in this case as it is in the other. But nevertheless I think it is quite true to say that, in the main, this feeling of the man's is protective in just the same sense as is the mother's. Looked at in one light it is cowardice, sheer cowardice; the cowardice not only of the man who will not pain himself, though the pain means help to another, but the cowardice of the man who, having fought his own way through the slough, who having arrived, mud-stained and weary, on some eminence where he may now seek rest, will not, dare not, turn to eye the foulness from which he has escaped.

Looked at in another light, though a very different one, we may see a horror of contemplating for one's little dear ones the possibility of their weakness having to stand against temptations the strength of which one knows only too well, for did one stand one's self? And, looked at either way, this instinct of the man leads him to *ignore*—in all his boy's education, excellent it may be in every other respect, he ignores this one point. He allows his instinct to govern him entirely on this one matter, though on every other he may bring his reason and his experience to bear even sooner and more strongly than may be altogether wise.

And the result of the action of father and mother is that the child grows up in more or less ignorance of these functions of his body, and my gospel is that the consequence of this brings untold harm.

In the course of two books written about boys and boy life, I have preached my gospel on the subject where the discussion brought me to the point of dealing with purity of mind and body in boys. I have been told that my enthusiasm on this subject carries me away,

and I daresay it is true. Very strong feeling on any subject leads one, no doubt, to bring down one's sledge-hammer with quite unnecessary force on the head often of quite the wrong nail. If in my efforts to fight the sin itself I have forgotten, in my denunciations, that I ought to have been inveighing against what the sin owes its origin to, I may well have failed to convince my critics ; I may well have found that when I have spoken most strongly and, as I hoped, most convincingly, the effect, after all, has been like beating the air. If the sledge-hammer prepared for the demolition of an evil falls by mistake upon a prejudice in people's minds from which this evil first took rise, it may well be that the aim may fail of its mark.

My experience with boys has taken me into the region where one meets with the results of the feeling, the prejudice which I believe is in the heart of every father and mother, unless reason has had its say, or experience thrown its light, the feeling that "it is better that children should not know" certain things. Let me appeal to men and women to examine

this instinct of protection, to follow it through the prejudices to which it gives rise, through the policy of ignorance to the farthest consequences of those prejudices; and let me beg these men and women to look with me on the result of this policy. Let us bear in mind that these facts of nature must be known some time in a man's or a woman's life, and let us consider very carefully whether it is better that this knowledge should come while a child has the natural purity of youth, unhampered by all the feelings on these subjects which make the danger of maturity, to help him to assimilate the knowledge safely; or whether the knowledge should be left to come to him somehow, anyhow, thrown at him through coarse lips, hinted at him with grins and half-shut eyes, learnt no one can say quite how, but acquired in its full force just at the age when this knowledge must mean temptation.

It is the full consideration of this that I would ask men and women to take with them when they are dealing with the maternal and the paternal instinct latent in every man that begets and every woman that bears a child.

And to those who, after reading what I have said, still "don't care," I have three words: God help them. And God help me too for not having the power or the force to speak in such wise that, in spite of themselves, they must hear and must care.

I laid myself open to two charges in this matter of outspokenness: the first I have tried to answer, the second was that I myself used too plain speaking, even when what I was advocating was the right course to pursue.

If one were a nurse, and if one were called upon to take charge of a case of cancer, would one shrink from the printed page on which was to be found the details of this terrible complaint? Cancer ought not to exist, *bien entendu*, it is some one's fault that it does exist, but there it is, and will a nurse skip the nasty details of the complaint, thereby stultifying all her efforts at help? And make the analogy more complete and say that a young mother is the nurse and the patient her own child. Can one dare to compare any bodily complaint with the cancer of mind and spirit that impurity of thought or action

breeds in a boy? Can one dare to hope to cure or prevent it unless one knows, in all its details, the cause and progress of the disease?

I have had one thing said to me and I have had another said to me; and I have sat by an old lady of eighty who has brought up sons and sent them into four different professions; and are any of these other arguments comparable to the tears of old age, shed for the ignorance of fifty years ago? The ignorance which kept her eldest boy at a school where, begging all the while to be taken away, he was learning lessons the miserable effects of which never altogether left him. And this lady's words are more to me than any criticism on the subject: "Oh, if I had only known what you are telling mothers now, my boy's life might have been so different!"

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